This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at http://books.google.com/

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07437279 2

# Q. HORATII FLACCI
# EPISTOLAE
AD
# PISONES,
ET
# AUGUSTUM:

WITH AN ENGLISH
COMMENTARY AND NOTES:
TO WHICH ARE ADDED
CRITICAL DISSERTATIONS.

BY THE
REVEREND MR. HURD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

THE FOURTH EDITION,
CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

VOL. I.

LONDON,
PRINTED FOR A. MILLAR, IN THE STRAND;
AND W. THURLBOURN AND J. WOODYER,
AT CAMBRIDGE. MDCCLXVI.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
827503
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1919 L

# CONTENTS.

## VOL. I.

Introduction—On Epiſtolary Writing.
Epistola ad Pisones: With an Engliſh Commentary and Notes.

## VOL. II.

Epistola ad Augustum: With an Engliſh Commentary and Notes.
Dissertation I. On the Idea of Univerſal Poetry.
Dissertation II. On the Provinces of Dramatic Poetry.

## VOL. III.

Dissertation III. On Poetical Imitation.
Dissertation IV. On the Marks of Imitation.

# TO

# SIR EDWARD LITTLETON, BAR^T.

DEAR SIR,

HAVING reviewed theſe Sheets with ſome care, I beg leave to put them into your hands, as a teſtimony of the reſpect I bear you; and, for the time that ſuch things may have the fortune to live, as a monument of our friendſhip.

You ſee, by the turn of this addreſs, you have nothing to fear from that offenſive adulation, which has ſo much diſhonoured Letters. You and I have lived together on other terms. And I ſhould be aſhamed to offer you even ſuch a trifle as this, in a manner that would give you a right to think meanly of its author.

Your extreme delicacy allows me to ſay nothing of my obligations, which otherwiſe would demand my warmeſt acknowledgments. For your conſtant favour has followed me in all ways, in which you could contrive to expreſs it. And indeed I have never known any man more ſenſible to the good offices of his friends, and even to their good intentions, or more diſpoſed, by every proper method, to acknowledge them. But you much over-rate the little ſervices, which it has been in my power to render to you. I had the honour

honour to be intruſted with a part of your education, and it was my duty to contribute all I could to the ſucceſs of it. But the taſk was eaſy and pleaſant. I had only to cultivate that good ſenſe, and thoſe generous virtues, which you brought with you to the Univerſity, and which had already grown up to ſome maturity under the care of a man, to whom we had both of us been extremely obliged; and who poſſeſſed every talent of a perfect inſtitutor of youth in a degree, which, I believe, has been rarely found in any of that profeſſion, ſince the days of *Quinctilian*.

I wiſh this ſmall tribute of reſpect, in which I know how cordially you join with me, could be any honour to the memory of an excellent perſon [*a*],

[*a*] The Reverend Mr. BUDWORTH, Head-Maſter of the Grammar School at BREWOOD, in Staffordſhire. He died in 1745.

who loved us both, and was leſs known, in his life-time, from that obſcure ſituation to which the caprice of fortune oft condemns the moſt accompliſhed characters, than his higheſt merit deſerved.

It was to cheriſh and improve that taſte of polite letters, which his early care had inſtilled into you, that you required me to explain to you the following exquiſite piece of the beſt poet. I recollect with pleaſure how welcome this ſlight eſſay then was to you; and am ſecure of the kind reception you will now give to it; improved, as I think it is, in ſome reſpects, and preſented to you in this public way.—I was going to ſay, how much you benefited by this poet (the fitteſt of all others, for the ſtudy of a gentleman) in your acquaintance with his *moral*, as well as critical writings; and how ſucceſsfully you applied yourſelf to every

every other part of learning, which was thought proper for you—But I remember my engagements with you, and will not hazard your diſpleaſure by ſaying too much. It is enough for me to add, that I truly reſpect and honour you; and that, for the reſt, I indulge in thoſe hopes, which every one, who knows you, entertains from the excellence of your nature, from the hereditary honour of your family, and from an education in which you have been trained to the ſtudy of the beſt things.

*I am,*

DEAR SIR,

*Your moſt faithful and*

*moſt obedient Servant,*

EMAN. COLL. CAMB.
June 21, 1757.

R. HURD.

# INTRODUCTION.

IT is agreed on all hands, that the antients are our maſters in the *art* of compoſition. Such of their writings, therefore, as deliver inſtructions for the exercise of this *art*, muſt be of the higheſt value. And, if any of them hath acquired a credit, in this reſpect, ſuperior to the reſt, it is, perhaps, the *following work*: which the learned have long ſince conſidered as a kind of *ſummary* of the rules of good writing; to be gotten by heart by every young ſtudent; and to whoſe deciſive authority the greateſt maſters in taſte and compoſition muſt finally ſubmit.

But the more unqueſtioned the credit of this poem is, the more it will concern the public, that it be juſtly and accurately underſtood. The writer of theſe ſheets then believed it might be of uſe, if he took ſome pains to clear the ſenſe, connect the method, and aſcertain the ſcope and purpoſe, of this admired epiſtle. Others, he knew indeed, and ſome of the firſt fame for critical learning, had been before him in this attempt. Yet he did not find himſelf prevented by their labours; in which, beſides innumerable

leſſer faults, he, more eſpecially, obſerved two inveterate errors, of ſuch a ſort, as muſt needs perplex the genius, and diſtreſs the learning of *any* commentator. The *one* of theſe reſpects the SUBJECT; the other, the METHOD of the *Art of poetry*. It will be neceſſary to ſay ſomething upon each.

1. That the *Art of poetry*, at large, is not the *proper* ſubject of this piece, is ſo apparent, that it hath not eſcaped the dulleſt and leaſt attentive of its critics. For, however all the different *kinds* of poetry might appear to enter into it, yet every one ſaw, that *ſome* at leaſt were very ſlightly conſidered: whence the frequent attempts, the *artes et inſtitutiones poeticæ*, of writers both at home and abroad, to ſupply its deficiencies. But, though this truth was ſeen and confeſs'd, it unluckily happened, that the ſagacity of his numerous commentators went no further. They ſtill conſidered this famous epiſtle as a *collection*, though not a *ſyſtem*, of criticiſms on poetry in general; with this conceſſion however, that the ſtage had evidently the largeſt ſhare in it [*a*]. Under the influence of this prejudice, ſeveral writers of name took upon them to comment and explane it: and with the ſucceſs, which was to be expected from ſo fatal a miſ-

[*a*] Satyra hæc eſt in ſui ſæculi poetas, PRÆCIPUE vero in Romanum drama. Baxter.

take

take on ſetting out, as the not ſeeing, "that the "proper and ſole purpoſe of the author, was, "not to abridge the Greek critics, whom he pro- "bably never thought of; nor to amuſe himſelf "with compoſing a ſhort critical ſyſtem, for "the general uſe of poets, which every line of "it abſolutely confutes; but, ſimply to criticize "the ROMAN DRAMA." For to this end, not the tenor of the work only, but, as will appear, every ſingle precept in it, ultimately refers. The miſchiefs of this original error have been long felt. It hath occaſioned a conſtant perplexity in defining the *general* method, and in fixing the import of *particular* rules. Nay its effects have reached ſtill further. For conceiving, as they did, that the whole had been compoſed out of the Greek critics, the labour and ingenuity of its interpreters have been miſemployed in picking out authorities, which were not wanted, and in producing, or, more properly, by their ſtudied refinements in *creating*, conformities, which were never deſigned. Whence it hath come to paſs, that, inſtead of inveſtigating the order of the poet's own reflexions, and ſcrutinizing the peculiar ſtate of the Roman ſtage (the methods, which common ſenſe and common criticiſm would preſcribe) the world hath been nauſeated with inſipid lectures on *Ariſtotle* and *Phalereus*; whoſe ſolid ſenſe hath

been ſo attenuated and ſubtilized by the delicate operation of French criticiſm, as hath even gone ſome way towards bringing the *art* itſelf into diſrepute.

2. But the wrong explications of this poem have ariſen, not from the miſconception of the *ſubject* only; but from an inattention to the METHOD of it. The *latter* was, in part, the genuin conſequence of the *former*. For, not ſuſpecting an unity of deſign in the ſubject, its interpreters never looked for, or could never find a conſiſtency of diſpoſition in the method. And this was indeed the very block upon which HEINSIUS, and, before him, JULIUS SCALIGER, himſelf, ſtumbled. Theſe illuſtrious critics, with all the force of genius, which is required to diſembarraſs an involved ſubject, and all the aids of learning, that can lend a ray to enlighten a dark one, have, notwithſtanding, found themſelves utterly unable to unfold the order of this epiſtle; inſomuch, that SCALIGER [b], hath boldly pronounced the conduct of it to be *vicious*; and HEINSIUS, had no other way to evade the charge, than by recurring to the forced and uncritical expedient of a licentious tranſpoſition. The truth is, they were both in one common error, That the poet's purpoſe had been to write a criticiſm of the art of poetry at large, and not,

[b] Præf. in LIB. POET. et l. vi. p. 338.

as is here ſhewn, of the Roman drama in particular. But there is ſomething more to be obſerved, in the caſe of HEINSIUS. For, as will be made appear in the notes on particular places, this critic did not pervert the order of the piece, from a ſimple miſtake about the drift of the ſubject, but, alſo, from a total inapprehenſion of the genuin charm and beauty of the *epiſtolary method.* And, becauſe I take this to be a principal cauſe of the wrong interpretations, that have been given of all the epiſtles of Horace; and it is, in itſelf, a point of curious criticiſm, of which little or nothing hath been ſaid by any good writer, I will take the liberty to enlarge upon it.

THE EPISTLE, however various in its appearances, is, in fact, but of *two* kinds; *one* of which may be called the DIDACTIC; the *other*, the ELEGIAC epiſtle. By the FIRST I mean all thoſe epiſtles, whoſe end is to *inſtruct*; whether the ſubject be *morals*, *politics*, *criticiſm*, or, in general, *human life:* by the LATTER, all thoſe, whoſe end is to *move*; whether the occaſion be *love*, *friendſhip*, *jealouſy*, or other private diſtreſſes. If there are ſome of a lighter kind in Horace, and other good writers, which ſeem not reducible to either of theſe two claſſes, they are to be regarded only, as the triflings of their pen, and deſerve not to be conſidered, as making a *third* and diſtinct ſpecies of this poem.

Now theſe two kinds of the *epiſtle*, as they differ widely from each other in their *ſubject* and *end*, ſo do they likewiſe in their *original:* though both *flouriſhed* at the ſame time, and are both wholly *Roman*.

I. The former, or DIDACTIC epiſtle, was, in fact, the true and proper offspring of the SATIRE. It will be worth while to reflect how this happened. *Satire*, in its origin, I mean in the rude *feſcennine farce*, from which the idea of this poem was taken, was a mere extemporaneous jumble of mirth and ill-nature. ENNIUS, who had the honour of introducing it under its new name, without doubt, civilized both, yet left it without form or method; it being only, in his hands, a rhapſody of poems on different ſubjects, and in different meaſures. Common ſenſe diſclaiming the extravagance of this heterogeneous mixture, LUCILIUS advanced it, in its next ſtep, to an unity of *deſign* and *metre*; which was ſo conſiderable a change, that it procured him the high appellation of INVENTOR of this poem. Though, when I ſay, that Lucilius introduced into ſatire *an unity of metre*, I mean only, in *the ſame piece*; for the meaſure, in different ſatires, appears to have been different. That the *deſign* in him was *one*, I conclude, *firſt*, Becauſe Horace expreſly informs us, that *the form or kind of writing* in the ſatires of Lucilius was exactly

actly the ſame with *that* in his own; in which no one will pretend, that there is the leaſt appearance of that rhapſodical, detached form, which made the character of the *old ſatire*. But, *principally*, becauſe, on any other ſuppoſition, it does not appear, what could give Lucilius a claim to that high appellation of INVENTOR of this poem. That he was the *firſt*, who copied the manner of the *old comedy* in ſatire, could never be ſufficient for this purpoſe. For all, that he derived into it from thence, was, as Quinctilian ſpeaks, *libertas atque inde acerbitas et abunde ſalis*. It ſharpened his *invective*, and poliſhed his *wit*, that is, it improved the *air*, but did not alter the *form* of the ſatire. As little can a right to this title be pleaded from the *uniformity of meaſure*, which he introduced into it. For *this*, without an *unity of deſign*, is ſo far from being an alteration for the better, that it even heightens the abſurdity; it being ſurely more reaſonable to adapt different meaſures to different ſubjects, than to treat a number of inconnected and quite different ſubjects in the *ſame* meaſure. When therefore Horace tells us, that Lucilius was the *Inventor* of the ſatire, it muſt needs be underſtood, that he was the FIRST, who, from its former confuſed ſtate, reduced it into a regular conſiſtent poem, reſpecting one main *end*, as well as obſerving one *meaſure*. Little now

 remained

remained for Horace but to poliſh and refine. His only material alteration was, that he appropriated to the ſatire one, that is, the heroic metre.

From this ſhort hiſtory of the ſatire we collect, 1. that its deſign was *one:* And 2. we learn, what was the general form of its compoſition. For, ariſing out of a looſe, disjointed, miſcellany, its method, when moſt regular, would be free and unconſtrained; nature demanding ſome chain of connexion, and a reſpect to its origin requiring that connexion to be ſlight and ſomewhat concealed. But its *aim*, as well as origin, exacted this careleſs method. For being, as Diomedes obſerves, *archææ comœdiæ charactere compoſitum*, "profeſſedly written after "the manner of the old comedy," it was of courſe to admit the familiarity of the comic muſe; whoſe genius is averſe from all conſtraint of *order*, ſave that only which a natural, ſucceſſive train of thinking unavoidably draws along with it. And this, by the way, accounts for the dialogue air, ſo frequent in the Roman ſatire, as likewiſe for the looſer numbers which appeared ſo eſſential to the grace of it. It was in learned alluſion to this comic genius of the ſatire, that Mr. Pope hath juſtly characterized it in the following manner:

"Horace

"Horace ſtill charms with graceful negligence,
"And, without method, TALKS us into ſenſe.

2. It being now ſeen, what was the real form of the *ſatire*, nothing, it is plain, was wanting, but the application of a particular addreſs, to conſtitute the *didactic epiſtle:* the ſtructure of this poem, as preſcribed by the laws of nature and good ſenſe, being in nothing different from that of the *other*. For here 1. an *unity* of ſubject or deſign is indiſpenſably neceſſary, the freedom of a miſcellaneous matter being permitted only to the familiar letter. And 2. not profeſſing *formally* to inſtruct (which alone juſtifies the ſeverity of ſtrict method) but, when of the graveſt kind, in the way of addreſs only to *inſinuate* inſtruction, it naturally takes an air of negligence and inconnexion, ſuch as we have before ſeen eſſential to the ſatire. All which is greatly confirmed by the teſtimony of *one*, who could not be uninformed in theſe matters. In addreſſing his friend on the object of his ſtudies, he ſays

*ſive*
*Liventem* ſatiram *nigra rubigine turpes*,
*Seu tua* NON ALIA *ſplendeſcat* epiſtola CURA.
[Stat. lib. i. Sylv. Tiburt. M. V.]

plainly intimating, that the rules and labour of compoſition were exactly the ſame in theſe two poems. Though the critics on Statius, not apprehending

prehending this identity, or exact correſpondence between the *ſatire* and *epiſtle*, have unneceſſarily, and without warrant, altered the text, in this place, from ALIA into ALTA.

3. The general form and ſtructure of *this* epiſtle being thus clearly underſtood, it will now be eaſy, in few words, to deduce the peculiar laws of its compoſition.

And 1. it cannot wholly diveſt itſelf of all method: For, having only one point in view, it muſt of courſe purſue it by ſome kind of connexion. The progreſs of the mind in rational thinking requires, that the chain be never broken entirely, even in its freeſt excurſions.

2. As there muſt needs be a *connexion*, ſo *that connexion* will beſt anſwer its end and the purpoſe of the writer, which, whilſt it leads, by a ſure train of thinking, to the concluſion in view, conceals itſelf all the while, and leaves to the reader the ſatisfaction of ſupplying the intermediate links, and joining together, in his own mind, what is left in a ſeeming poſture of neglect and inconnexion. The art of furniſhing this gratification, ſo reſpectful to the ſagacity of the reader, without putting him to the trouble of a painful inveſtigation, is what conſtitutes the ſupreme charm and beauty of EPISTOLARY METHOD.

II. What

II. What hath hitherto been advanced reſpects chiefly the *didactic* form. It remains to ſay ſomething of that other *ſpecies* of the epiſtle, the ELEGIAC; which, as I obſerved, had quite another *original*. For this apparently ſprung up from what is properly called the *Elegy:* a poem of very antient Greek extraction: naturally ariſing from the plaintive, querulous humour of mankind; which, under the preſſure of any grief, is impatient to break forth into wailings and tender expoſtulations, and finds a kind of relief in indulging and giving a looſe to that flow of ſorrow, which it hath not ſtrength or reſolution wholly [*c*] to reſtrain. This is the account of the *Elegy* in its proper Greek form; a negligent, inconnected, abrupt ſpecies of writing, perfectly ſuited to an indolent diſpoſition and paſſionate heart. Such was OVID's; who, taking advantage of this character of the elegy, contrived [*d*] a new kind of poetry, without the expence of much invention, or labour to himſelf. For collecting, as it were, thoſe ſcattered

[*c*] *Mærorem minui*, ſays Tully, grieving for the loſs of his daughter, *dolorem nec potui, nec, ſi poſſem*, VELLEM. [Ep. ad Att. xii. 28.] A ſtriking picture of real grief!

[*d*] *Vel tibi compoſita cantetur* EPISTOLA *voce;*
IGNOTUM HOC ALIIS ILLE NOVAVIT OPUS.
ART. AMAT. l. iii. ℣ 345.

hints,

hints, which compoſed the elegy, and directing them to one principal view; and ſuperadding a perſonal addreſs, he became the author of what is here ſtyled the *Elegiac* epiſtle; beautiful models of which we have in his HEROIDES, and the *Epiſtles from* PONTUS. We ſee then the difference of *this* from the *didactic* form. They have both one principal end and point in view. But the *Didactic*, being of a cooler and more ſedate turn, purſues its deſign uniformly and connects eaſily. The *Elegiac*, on the contrary, whoſe end is *emotion*, not *inſtruction*, hath all the abruptneſs of irregular diſordered paſſion. It catches at remote and diſtant hints, and ſtarts at once into a digreſſive train of thinking, which it requires ſome degree of enthuſiaſm in the reader to follow.

Further than this it is not material to my preſent deſign to purſue this ſubject. More exact ideas of the form and conſtitution of this epiſtle, muſt be ſought in that beſt example of it, the natural Roman poet. It may only be obſerved of the different qualities, neceſſary to thoſe, who aſpire to excel in theſe *two* ſpecies; that, as the *one* would make an impreſſion on the *heart*, it can only do this by means of an exquiſite *ſenſibility of nature and elegance of mind*; and that the *other*, attempting in the moſt inoffenſive manner, to inform the *head*, muſt demand, to the

full

full accompliſhment of its purpoſe, *ſuperior good ſenſe, the wideſt knowledge of life*, and, above all, *the politeneſs of a conſummate addreſs*. That the *former* was the characteriſtic of OVID's genius hath been obſerved, and is well known. How far the *latter* deſcription agrees to HORACE can be no ſecret to thoſe of his readers who have any ſhare, or conception of theſe talents themſelves. But matters of this *nicer* kind are properly the objects, not of *criticiſm*, but of *ſentiment*. Let it ſuffice then to examine the poet's practice; ſo far only, as we are enabled to judge of it by the ſtandard of the preceding rules.

III. Theſe rules are reducible to *three*. 1. *that there be an unity in the ſubject*. 2. *a connexion in the method:* and 3. *that ſuch connexion be eaſy*. All which I ſuppoſe to have been religiouſly obſerved in the poet's conduct of *this*, i. e. the *didactic* epiſtle. For,

[1.] The *ſubject* of each epiſtle is one: that is, one ſingle point is proſecuted through the whole piece, notwithſtanding that the addreſs of the poet, and the delicacy of the ſubject may ſometimes lead him through a devious tract to it. Had his interpreters attended to this practice, ſo conſonant to the rule of nature before explained, they could never have found *an art of poetry* in the epiſtle, we are about to examine.

[2.] This

[2.] This one point, however it hath not been ſeen [e], is conſtantly purſued by an uniform, conſiſtent *method*; which is never more artificial, than when leaſt apparent to a careleſs, inattentive reader. This ſhould have ſtimulated his learned critics to ſeek the connexion of the poet's own ideas, when they magiſterially ſet themſelves to tranſpoſe or vilify his method.

[3.] This method is every where ſufficiently *clear and obvious*; proceeding if not in the ſtricteſt forms of *diſpoſition*, yet, in an eaſy, elegant progreſs, one hint ariſing out of another, and inſenſibly giving occaſion to ſucceeding ones, juſt as the cooler genius of this *kind* required. This, laſtly, ſhould have prevented thoſe, who have taken upon themſelves to criticize *the art of poetry* by the laws of *this* poem, from concealing

[e] J. Scaliger ſays, *Epiſtolas, Græcorum more, Phocylidæ atque Theognidis* [Horatius] *ſcripſit: præceptis philoſophiæ divulſis minimeque inter ſe cohærentibus.* And of *this* Epiſtle, in particular, he preſumes to ſay, *De Arte quæres quid ſentiam. Quid? Equidem quod de Arte ſine arte traditâ.* And to the ſame purpoſe another great Critic; *Non ſolum antiquorum ὑποθῆκαι in moralibus hoc habuere, ut ἀκολουθίαν non ſervarent, ſed etiam alia de quibuſcunque rebus præcepta. Sic Epiſtola Horatii ad Piſones de Poëticâ perpetuum ordinem ſeriemque* NULLAM *habet; ſed ab uno præcepto ad aliud tranſilit, quamvis* NULLA *ſit materiæ affinitas ad ſenſum connectendum.* [Salmaſii Not. in Epictetum et Simplicium, p. 13. *Lugd. Bat.* 1640.]

their

their ignorance of its real views under the cover of ſuch abrupt and violent tranſitions, as might better agree to the impaſſioned *elegy*, than to the ſedate *didactic epiſtle*.

To ſet this three-fold character, in the fulleſt light, before the view of the reader, I have attempted to explane the *Epiſtle to the Piſos*, in the way of continued commentary upon it. And, that the coherence of the ſeveral parts may be the more diſtinctly ſeen, the Commentary is rendered as conciſe as poſſible; ſome of the finer and leſs obvious connexions being more carefully obſerved and drawn out in the notes.

For the *kind* of interpretation itſelf, it muſt be allowed, of all others, the fitteſt to throw light upon a difficult and obſcure ſubject, and, above all, to convey an exact idea of the ſcope and order of any work. It hath, accordingly, been ſo conſidered by ſeveral of the foreign, particularly the ITALIAN, critics; who have eſſayed long ſince to illuſtrate, in this way, the very piece before us. But the *ſucceſs* of theſe foreigners is, I am ſenſible, a ſlender recommendation of their *method*. I chuſe therefore to reſt on the *ſingle* authority of a great author, who, in his *edition* of our Engliſh Horace, the *beſt* that ever was given of any claſſic, hath now retrieved and eſtabliſhed the full credit of it. What was the amuſement of his pen, becomes, indeed,

indeed, the *labour* of inferior writers. Yet, on theſe unequal terms, it can be no diſcredit to have aimed at ſome reſemblance of one of the leaſt of thoſe *merits*, which ſhed their united honours on the name of the illuſtrious *friend and commentator of* Mr. POPE.

# Q. HORATII FLACCI
# ARS POETICA
## EPISTOLA AD PISONES.

HUMANO capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere ſi velit, et varias inducere plumas
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Deſinat in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne;
Spectatum admiſſi riſum teneatis amici?
Credite, Piſones, iſti tabulae fore librum
Perſimilem, cujus, velut aegri ſomnia, vanae
Fingentur ſpecies; ut nec pes, nec caput uni

### COMMENTARY.

THE ſubject of this piece being, as I ſuppoſe, *one*, viz. *the ſtate of the Roman Drama*, and common ſenſe requiring, even in the freeſt forms of compoſition, ſome kind of *method*, the intelligent reader will not be ſurprized to find the poet proſecuting his ſubject in a regular, well-ordered *plan*; which, for the more exact deſcription of it, I diſtinguiſh into three parts:

I. The firſt of them [from ℣ 1 to 89] is preparatory to the main ſubject of the epiſtle, containing ſome general rules and reflexions on poetry, but principally with an eye to the following parts: by

Reddatur formae. Pictoribus atque poetis
Quidlibet audendi ſemper fuit aequa poteſtas:
Scimus, et hanc veniam petimuſque damuſque viciſſim:
Sed non ut placidis coëant inmitia; non ut

COMMENTARY.

which means it ſerves as an uſeful introduction to the poet's deſign, and opens with that air of eaſe and negligence, eſſential to the epiſtolary form.

II. The main body of the epiſtle [from ℣ 89 to 295] is laid out in regulating the *Roman* ſtage; but chiefly in giving rules for tragedy; not only as that was the ſublimer ſpecies of the *Drama*, but, as it ſhould ſeem, leſs cultivated and underſtood.

III. The laſt part [from ℣ 295 to the end] exhorts to correctneſs in writing; yet ſtill with an eye, principally, to the *dramatic ſpecies:* and is taken up partly in removing the cauſes, that prevented it, and partly in directing to the uſe of ſuch means, as might ſerve to promote it. Such is the general plan of the epiſtle. In order to enter fully into it, it will be neceſſary to trace the poet, attentively, through the elegant connexions of his own method.

## PART I.

### GENERAL REFLEXIONS ON POETRY.

THE epiſtle begins [to ℣ 9] with that general and fundamental precept *of preſerving an unity in the ſubject and the diſpoſition of the piece.* This is further explained by defining the uſe, and fixing the character of *poetic licence* [from ℣ 9 to 13] which unſkil-

Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.
Inceptis gravibus plerumque et magna profeſſis
Purpureus, late qui ſplendeat, unus et alter
Adſuitur pannus: cum lucus, et ara Dianae,
Et properantis aquae per amoenos ambitus agros,
Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius deſcribitur arcus.
Sed nunc non erat his locus: et fortaſſe cupreſſum
Scis ſimulare: quid hoc, ſi fractis enatat exſpes
Navibus, aere dato qui pingitur? amphora coepit
Inſtitui, currente rota, cur urceus exit?
Denique ſit quidvis; ſimplex dumtaxat et unum.
Maxima pars vatum, pater et juvenes patre digni,

COMMENTARY.

ful writers often plead in defence of their tranſgreſſions againſt the law of UNITY. To ℣ 23 is conſidered and expoſed that particular violation of *uniformity*, into which young poets eſpecially, under the impulſe of a warm imagination, are apt to run, ariſing from frequent and ill-timed deſcriptions. Theſe, however beautiful in themſelves, and with whatever maſtery they may be executed, yet, if foreign to the ſubject, and incongruous to the place, where they ſtand, are extremely impertinent: a caution, the more neceſſary, as the fault itſelf wears the appearance of a *virtue*, and ſo writers [from ℣ 23 to 25] come to tranſgreſs the *rule of right* from their very ambition to obſerve it. There are two caſes, in which this *ambition* remarkably miſleads us. The

Decipimur ſpecie recti. Brevis eſſe laboro,
Obſcurus fio: ſectantem lenia nervi
Deficiunt animique: profeſſus grandia turget:
Serpit humi tutus nimium timiduſque procellae:
Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,
Delphinum ſilvis adpingit, fluctibus aprum.
In vitium ducit culpae fuga, ſi caret arte.
Aemilium circa ludum faber, unus et unguis
Exprimet, et mollis imitabitur aere capillos;

COMMENTARY.

*firſt* is, when it tempts us to puſh an *acknowledged beauty* too far. Great beauties are always in the confines of great faults; and therefore, by affecting ſuperior excellence, we are eaſily carried into abſurdity. Thus [from ℣ 25 to 30] *brevity* is often *obſcurity*; *ſublimity*, *bombaſt*; *caution*, *coolneſs*; and, to come round to the point, a fondneſs for *varying and diverſifying a ſubject*, by means of epiſodes and deſcriptions, ſuch as are mentioned above [℣ 15] will often betray a writer into that capital error of violating the *unity* of his piece. For, though variety be a real excellence under the conduct of true judgment, yet, when affected beyond the bounds of probability, and brought in ſolely to *ſtrike* and *ſurprize*, it becomes unſeaſonable and abſurd. The ſeveral epiſodes or deſcriptions, intended to give that variety, may be inſerted in improper places; and then the abſurdity is as great, as that of the painter, who, according to the illuſtration of ℣ 19, 20, ſhould introduce a cypreſs into a ſea-piece, or, according to the illuſtration of the preſent verſe, who paints a dolphin in a wood, or a boar in the ſea.

2. Another

Infelix operis, ſumma: quia ponere totum 34
Neſciet. hunc ego me, ſi quid componere curem,
Non magis eſſe velim; quam naſo vivere pravo,
Spectandum nigris oculis nigroque capillo.
Sumite materiam veſtris, qui ſcribitis, aequam
Viribus; et verſate diu, quid ferre recuſent,
Quid valeant humeri. cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deſeret hunc, nec lucidus ordo. 41
Ordinis haec virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor;

COMMENTARY.

2. Another inſtance, in which we are miſled by an *ambition of attaining to what is right*, is, when, through an exceſſive fear of committing faults, we diſqualify ourſelves for the juſt execution of a *whole*, or of ſuch *particulars*, as are ſuſceptible of real beauty. For not the affectation of ſuperior excellencies only, but even

*In vitium ducit* culpae fuga, *ſi caret arte.*

This is aptly illuſtrated by the caſe of a ſculptor. An over-ſcrupulous diligence to finiſh ſingle and trivial parts in a ſtatue, which, when moſt exact, are only not faulty, leaves him utterly incapable of doing juſtice to the more important members, and, above all, of deſigning and completing a *whole* with any degree of perfection. But this latter is commonly the defect of a minute genius; who, having taken in hand a deſign, which he is by no means able to execute, naturally applies himſelf to labour and finiſh thoſe parts, which he finds are within his power. It is of conſequence therefore [from ℣ 38 to 40] for every writer to be well acquainted with the nature

 and

Ut jam nunc dicat, jam nunc debentia dici
Pleraque differat et praeſens in tempus omittat,
Hoc amet, hoc ſpernat, promiſſi carminis auctor.
In verbis etiam tenuis cautuſque ſerendis,
Dixeris egregie, notum ſi callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum. ſi forte neceſſe eſt
Indiciis monſtrare recentibus abdita rerum;
Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis

COMMENTARY.

and extent of his own talents: and to be careful to chuſe a ſubject, which is, in all its parts, proportioned to his ſtrength and ability. Beſides, from ſuch an attentive ſurvey of his ſubject, and of his capacity to treat it, he will alſo derive theſe further advantages [℣ 41] 1. That he cannot be wanting in a proper fund of matter, wherewith to inlarge under every head: nor, 2. can he fail, by ſuch a well-weighed choice, to diſpoſe of his ſubject in the beſt and moſt convenient method. Eſpecially, as to the latter, which is the principal benefit, he will perceive [to ℣ 45] where it will be uſeful to preſerve, and where to change, the natural order of his ſubject, as may beſt ſerve to anſwer the ends of poetry.

Thus far ſome general reflexions concerning *poetical diſtribution*; principally, as it may be affected by falſe notions, 1. Of *poetic licence* [℣ 10] and, 2. Of *poetic perfection* [℣ 25]. But the ſame cauſes will equally affect the *language*, as *method*, of poetry. To theſe then are properly ſubjoined ſome directions about the *uſe of words*. Now this particular depending ſo entirely on what is out of the reach of rule, as

the

Contînget: dabiturque licentia ſumta pudenter.
Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem; ſi
Graeco fonte cadent, parce detorta. quid autem;
Caecilio Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademtum
Virgilio Varioque? ego cur adquirere pauca,
Si poſſum, invideor? quum lingua Catonis et
Ennî

COMMENTARY.

the faſhion of the age, the taſte of the writer, and his knowledge of the language, in which he writes, the poet only gives directions about *new words:* or, ſince every language is neceſſarily imperfect, about the *coining of ſuch words*, as the writer's neceſſity or convenience may demand. And here, after having preſcribed [l. 46] a great *caution* and *ſparingneſs* in the thing itſelf, he obſerves, 1. [to l. 49] That where it ought to be done, the better and leſs offenſive way will be, not to coin a *word* entirely new (for this is ever a taſk of ſome envy) but, by means of an ingenious and happy poſition of a well-known word, in reſpect of ſome others, to give it a new air, and caſt. Or, if it be neceſſary to *coin new words*, as it will be in ſubjects of an abſtruſe nature, and eſpecially ſuch, as were never before treated in the language, that then, 2. [to l. 54] this liberty is very allowable; but that the reception of them will be more eaſy, if we derive them gently, and without too much violence, from their proper ſource, that is, from a language, as the Greek, already known, and approved. And, to obviate the prejudices of over-ſcrupulous critics on this head, he goes on [from l. 54 to l. 73] in a vein of popular illuſtration, to alledge, in favour of this li-

Sermonem patrium ditaverit, et nova rerum
Nomina protulerit. licuit, ſemperque licebit
Signatum praeſente nota procudere nummum.
Ut ſilvis folia privos mutantur in annos;
Prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit aetas,
Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.
Debemur morti nos, noſtraque: ſive receptus
Terra Neptunus claſſis Aquilonibus arcet,
Regis opus; ſterilisve palus prius aptaque remis
Vicinas urbis alit, et grave ſentit aratrum:
Seu curſum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis,
Doctus iter melius: mortalia cuncta peribunt:
Nedum ſermonum ſtet honos, et gratia vivax.
Multa renaſcentur, quae jam cecidere; cadentque,
Quae nunc ſunt in honore vocabula: ſi volet uſus,
Quem penes arbitrium eſt, et jus, et norma loquendi.
Res geſtae regumque ducumque, et triſtia bella,
Quo ſcribi poſſent numero, monſtravit Homerus.
Verſibus inpariter junctis querimonia primum,

COMMENTARY.

berty, the examples of antient writers, and the vague, unſteddy nature of language itſelf.

From theſe reflexions on poetry, at large, he proceeds now to *particulars:* the moſt obvious of which being the different *forms and meaſures* of poetic compoſition, he conſiders, in this view [from ỳ 75 to 86] the four great ſpecies of poetry, to which all others may be reduced, *the Epic, Elegiac, Dramatic,* and *Lyric.*

Poſt etiam incluſa eſt voti ſententia compos.
Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiſerit auctor,
Grammatici certant, et adhuc ſub judice lis eſt.
Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo.
Hunc ſocci cepere pedem grandeſque cothurni,
Alternis aptum ſermonibus, et popularis
Vincentem ſtrepitus, et natum rebus agendis.
Muſa dedit fidibus Divos, pueroſque Deorum,
Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine primum,
Et juvenum curas, et libera vina referre.
Deſcriptas ſervare vices operumque colores,
Cur ego, ſi nequeo ignoroque, poeta ſalutor?
Cur neſcire, pudens prave, quam diſcere malo?
Verſibus exponi tragicis res comica non volt:
Indignatur item privatis ac prope ſocco
Dignis carminibus narrari coena Thyeſtae.
Singula quaeque locum teneant ſortita decentem.
Interdum tamen et vocem comoedia tollit,

COMMENTARY.

*Lyric.* But the diſtinction of the *meaſures* to be obſerved in the ſeveral ſpecies of poetry is ſo obvious, that there can ſcarcely be any miſtake about them. The difficulty is to know [from ℣ 86 to 89] how far, each may partake of the *ſpirit* of other, without deſtroying that *natural and neceſſary difference,* which ought to ſubſiſt betwixt them all. To explane this, which is a point of great nicety, he conſiders [from ℣ 89 to 99] the caſe of dramatic poetry; the two ſpecies

Iratuſque Chremes tumido dilitigat ore.
Et tragicus plerumque dolet ſermone pedeſtri.
Telephus aut Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas et ſeſquipedalia verba,
Si curat cor ſpectantis tetigiſſe querela.
Non ſatis eſt pulchra eſſe poëmata; dulcia ſunto,
Et quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunto.
Ut ridentibus adrident, ita flentibus adflent

COMMENTARY.

ſpecies of which are as diſtinct from each other, as any two can be, and yet there are times, when the features of the one will be allowed to reſemble thoſe of the other. For, 1. Comedy, in the paſſionate parts, will admit of a tragic elevation: and, 2. Tragedy, in its ſoft diſtreſsful ſcenes, condeſcends to the eaſe of familiar converſation. But the poet had a further view in chuſing this inſtance. For he gets by this means into the main of his ſubject, which was dramatic poetry, and, by the moſt delicate tranſition imaginable, proceeds [from l. 89 to 323] to deliver a ſeries of rules, interſperſed with hiſtorical accounts, and enlivened by digreſſions, for the regulation and improvement of the ROMAN STAGE.

## PART II.

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE REGULATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ROMAN STAGE.

HAVING fixed the diſtinct limits and provinces of the two ſpecies of the drama, the poet enters directly on his ſubject, and conſiders, I. [from ỳ 99 to 119]

Humani voltus. ſi vis me flere, dolendum eſt
Primum ipſi tibi: tunc tua me infortunia laedent.
Telephe, vel Peleu, male ſi mandata loqueris,
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo. triſtia moeſtum
Voltum verba decent; iratum, plena minarum;
Ludentem, laſciva; ſeverum, ſeria dictu.
Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem
Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut inpellit ad iram,
Aut ad humum maerore gravi deducit, et angit:
Poſt effert animi motus interprete lingua.
Si dicentis erunt fortunis abſona dicta,
Romani tollent equiteſque patreſque cachinnum.
Intererit multum, Divuſne loquatur, an heros;
Maturuſne ſenex, an adhuc florente juventa
Fervidus; et matrona potens, an ſedula nutrix;
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;
Colchus, an Aſſyrius; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.

COMMENTARY.

119] the properties of the TRAGIC STYLE; which will be different, 1. [to ℣ 111] according to the *internal ſtate and character* of the ſpeaker: thus one ſort of expreſſion will become the *angry*, another, the *ſorrowful*; this, the *gay*, that, the *ſevere*. And, 2. [from ℣ 111 to 119] according to the outward circumſtances of *rank*, *age*, *office*, or *country*.

II. Next [to ℣ 179] he treats of the CHARACTERS, which are of two ſorts. 1. *Old ones, revived:* and 2. *Invented, or new ones.* In relation to the *firſt* [from

℣ 119

Aut famam ſequere, aut ſibi convenientia finge,
Scriptor. Homereum ſi forte reponis Achillem;
Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
Jura neget ſibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.
Sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,
Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, triſtis Oreſtes.
Si quid inexpertum ſcenae conmittis, et audes
Perſonam formare novam; ſervetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, et ſibi conſtet.
Difficile eſt proprie communia dicere: tuque
Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm ſi proferres ignota indictaque primus.
Publica materies privati juris erit, ſi
Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem;
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres; nec deſilies imitator in artum,
Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex.

COMMENTARY.

℣ 119 to 125] the precept is, to *follow fame*; that is, to faſhion the character according to the *received, ſtanding idea*, which tradition and elder times have conſecrated; that idea being the ſole teſt, whereby to judge of it. 2. In reſpect of the *latter* [from ℣ 125 to 128] the great requiſite is *uniformity*, or *conſiſtency of repreſentation*. But the formation of quite *new characters* is a work of great difficulty and hazard. For here, there is no generally received and fixed *archetype* to work after, but every one judges, of common right, according to the extent and compre-henſion

Nec ſic incipies, ut ſcriptor cyclius olim:
Fortunam Priami cantabo, et nobile bellum.
Quid dignum tanto feret hic promiſſor hiatu?
Parturiunt montes: naſcetur ridulus mus.
Quanto rectius hic, qui nîl molitur inepte!
Dic mihi, Musa, virum, captae post moenia Trojae,
Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbis.
Non fumum ex fulgore, ſed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut ſpeciosa dehinc miracula promat,
Antiphaten, Scyllamque, et cum Cylope Charybdin.

COMMENTARY.

henſion of his own idea. Therefore [to ℣ 136] he adviſes to labour and refit *old characters and ſubjects*; particularly thoſe, made known and authorized by the practice of Homer and the epic writers; and directs, at the ſame time, by what means to avoid that *ſervility and unoriginal air*, ſo often charged upon ſuch pieces. I ſaid *characters and ſubjects*, for his method leading him to guard againſt ſervility of imitation in point of *characters*, the poet choſe to diſpatch the whole affair of *ſervile imitation* at once, and therefore [to ℣ 136] includes *ſubjects*, as well as *characters*.

But this very advice, about taking the ſubjects and characters from the epic poets, might be apt to lead into two faults, ariſing from the ill conduct of thoſe

Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,
Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo:
Semper ad eventum feſtinat; et in medias res,
Non ſecus ac notas, auditorem rapit: et quae
Deſperat tractata niteſcere poſſe, relinquit:
Atque ita mentitur, ſic veris falſa remiſcet,
Primo ne medium, medio ne diſcrepet imum.

COMMENTARY.

poets themſeves. For, 1. [to ℣ 146] the dignity and importance of a ſubject, made ſacred by antient fame, had ſometimes occaſioned a boaſtful and oſtentatious beginning, than which nothing can be more offenſive. And, 2. The whole ſtory being compoſed of great and ſtriking particulars, injudicious writers, for fear of loſing any part of it, which might ſerve to adorn their work, had been led to follow the *round of plain hiſtoric order*, and ſo had made the diſpoſition of their piece *unintereſting and unartful*. Now both theſe improprieties, which appear ſo ſhocking in the *epic poem*, muſt needs, with ſtill higher reaſon, deform the *tragic*. For, taking its riſe, not from the flattering views of the *poet*, but the real ſituation of the *actor*, its opening muſt, of neceſſity, be very ſimple and unpretending. And being, from its ſhort term of action, unable naturally to prepare and bring about many events, it, of courſe, confines itſelf to *one*; as alſo for the ſake of producing a due *diſtreſs* in the plot; which can never be wrought up to any *trying* pitch, unleſs the whole attention be made to fix on *one* ſingle object. The way to avoid both theſe faults,

will

Tu, quid ego et populus mecum deſideret, audi;
Si fautoris eges aulaea manentis, et uſque
Seſſuri, donec cantor, Vos plaudite, dicat:
Aetatis cujuſque notandi ſunt tibi mores,
Mobilibuſque decor naturis dandus et annis.
Reddere qui voces jam ſcit puer, et pede certo
Signat humum; geſtit paribus colludere, et iram

COMMENTARY.

will be to obſerve (for here the imitation cannot be too cloſe) the well-judged practice of Homer.

Having thus conſidered the affair of *imitation*, and ſhewn how *old characters*, and, to carry it ſtill further, *old* ſubjects, may be ſucceſsfully treated, he reſumes the head of *characters*, and proceeds more fully [from ȳ 153 to 179] to recommend it as a point of principal concern in the drawing of them, to be well acquainted with the manners, agreeing to the ſeveral ſucceſſive periods and ſtages of human life. And this with propriety: for, though he had given a hint to this purpoſe before,

> *Maturuſne ſenex, an adhuc florente juventâ*
> *Fervidus,*

yet, as it is a point of ſingular importance, and a regard to *it*, beſides other diſtinctions, muſt be conſtantly had in the draught of every character, it well deſerved a ſeparate conſideration.

III. Theſe inſtructions, which, in ſome degree, reſpect all kinds of poetry, being diſmiſſed; he now delivers ſome rules more peculiarly relative to the caſe of the *drama*. And, as the *miſapplication of manners*, which was the point he had been conſidering, was deſtructive

Colligit ac ponit temere, et mutatur in horas.
Inberbus juvenis, tandem cuſtode remoto,
Gaudet equis canibuſque et aprici gramine campi;
Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus aſper,
Utilium tardus proviſor, prodigus aeris,
Sublimis, cupiduſque, et amata relinquere pernix:
Converſis ſtudiis, aetas animuſque virilis
Quaerit opes et amicitias, inſervit honori;
Conmiſiſſe cavet quod mox mutare laboret.
Multa ſenem circumveniunt incommoda; vel quod
Quaerit, et inventis miſer abſtinet, ac timet uti;
Vel quòd res omnis timide gelideque miniſtrat,
Dilator, ſpe lentus, iners, paviduſque futuri;
Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
Se puero, caſtigator, cenſorque minorum.
Multa ferunt anni venientes commoda ſecum,
Multa recedentes adimunt: ne forte ſeniles
Mandentur juveni partes, pueroque viriles.
Semper in adjunctis aevoque morabimur aptis.
Aut agitur res in ſcenis, aut acta refertur:

COMMENTARY.

ſtructive of *probability*, this leads the poet, by a natural order, to cenſure ſome other ſpecies of miſconduct, which have the *ſame effect*. He determines then 1. [from ✝ 179 to 189] The caſe of *repreſentation* and *recital:* or what it is, which renders ſome things more fit to be *acted* on the ſtage, others more fit to be *related* on it.

Next,

Segnius inritant animos demiſſa per aurem,
Quam quae ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus, et quae
Ipſe ſibi tradit ſpectator. non tamen intus
Digna geri promes in ſcenam: multaque tolles
Ex oculis, quae mox narret facundia praeſens:
Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet;
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus;
Aut in avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.
Quodcunque oſtendis mihi ſic, incredulus odi.
Neve minor, neu ſit quinto productior actu
Fabula, quae poſci volt, et ſpectata reponi.
Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit: nec quarta loqui perſona laboret.
Actoris partes chorus, officiumque virile
Defendat: neu quid medios intercinat actus,
Quod non propoſito conducat et haereat apte.
Ille bonis faveatque et conſilietur amice,
Et regat iratos, et amet pacare tumentis:
Ille dapes laudet menſae brevis, ille ſalubrem

COMMENTARY.

Next, 2. In purſuance of the ſame point, *viz. probability* [to ♈ 193] he reſtrains the uſe of *machines*; and preſcribes the number of *acts*, and of *perſons*, to be introduced on the ſtage at the ſame time. And, 3. laſtly, the *perſona dramatis*, juſt mentioned, ſuggeſting it to his thoughts, he takes occaſion from thence to paſs on to the *chorus* [from ♈ 193 to 202] whoſe double office it was, 1. To ſuſtain the part of a *perſona dramatis* in the acts; and, 2. To connect the *acts* with

Juſtitiam, legeſque, et apertis otia portis:
Ille tegat conmiſſa, Deoſque precetur et oret,
Ut redeat miſeris, abeat fortuna ſuperbis.
Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco juncta, tubaeque
Aemula; ſed tenuis, ſimplexque foramine pauco,
Aſpirare et adeſſe choris erat utilis, atque
Nondum ſpiſſa nimis conplere ſedilia flatu:
Quo ſane populus numerabilis, utpote parvus
Et frugi caſtuſque verecunduſque coibat.
Poſtquam coepit agros extendere victor, et urbem
Laxior amplecti murus, vinoque diurno
Placari Genius feſtis inpune diebus;
Acceſſit numeriſque modiſque licentia major.
Indoctus quid enim ſaperet liberque laborum,

COMMENTARY.

ſongs, perſuading to good morals, and ſuitable to the ſubject. Further, tragedy being, originally, nothing more than a *chorus* or ſong, ſet to muſic, from which practice the harmony of the regular chorus in after-times had its riſe, he takes occaſion to digreſs [from ℣ 202 to 220] in explaining the ſimplicity and barbarity of the *old*, and the refinements of the *later*, muſic. The application of this account of the dramatic muſic to the caſe of the tragic chorus, together with a ſhort glance at the other improvements of *numbers, ſtyle*, &c. neceſſarily connected with it, gives him the opportunity of going off eaſily into a ſubject of near affinity with this, *viz.* the *Roman ſatiric piece*; which was indeed a ſpecies of tragedy, but of ſo extraordinary a compoſition, as to require a ſet of rules,

and

Ruſticus urbano confuſus, turpis honeſto?
Sic priſcae motumque et luxuriem addidit arti
Tibicen, traxitque vagus per pulpita veſtem:
Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere ſeveris,
Et tulit eloquium inſolitum facundia praeceps;
Utiliumque ſagax rerum, et divina futuri,
Sortilegis non diſcrepuit ſententia Delphis.
Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,
Mox etiam agreſtis Satyros nudavit, et aſper
Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit: eo quod
Inlecebris erat et grata novitate morandus
Spectator functuſque ſacris, et potus, et exlex.
Verum ita riſores, ita commendare dicacis

COMMENTARY.

and inſtructions, peculiar to itſelf. A point, in which they agreed, but which was greatly miſunderſtood or ill-obſerved by his countrymen, was the kind of verſe or meaſure employed in them. This therefore, by a diſpoſition of the moſt beautiful method, he reſerves for a conſideration by itſelf, having, firſt of all, delivered ſuch rules, as ſeemed neceſſary about thoſe points, in which they eſſentially differed. He explains then [from ỳ 220 to 225] the *uſe and end* of the *ſatires*, ſhewing them to be deſigned for the exhilaration of the ruſtic youth, on their ſolemn feſtivities, after the exhibition of the graver, tragic ſhews. But, 2, To convert, as far as was poſſible, what was thus a neceſſary ſacrifice to the taſte of the multitude into a tolerable entertainment for the better ſort, he lays down [from ỳ 225 to 240] the exacteſt deſcrip-

Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere ſeria ludo;
Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros,
Regali conſpectus in auro nuper et oſtro,
Migret in obſcuras humili ſermone tabernas:
Aut, dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captet.
Effutire levis indigna tragoedia verſus,
Ut feſtis matrona moveri juſſa diebus,
Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.
Non ego inornata et dominantia nomina ſolum
Verbaque, Piſones, Satyrorum ſcriptor amabo:
Nec ſic enitar tragico differre colori;
Ut nihil interſit, Davuſne loquatur et audax
Pythias emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,
An cuſtos famuluſque Dei Silenus alumni.
Ex noto fictum carmen ſequar: ut ſibi quivis
Speret idem; ſudet multum, fruſtraque laboret
Auſus idem: tantum ſeries juncturaque pollet:
Tantum de medio ſumtis accedit honoris.
Silvis deducti caveant, me judice, Fauni,
Ne velut innati triviis, ac pene forenſes,

COMMENTARY.

tion or idea of this ſort of poem; by means of which he inſtructs us in the due temperature and decorum of the ſatyric ſtyle. 3. Laſtly, [from ℣ 240 to 251] he directs to the choice of proper ſubjects, and defines the juſt character of thoſe principal and ſo uncommon *perſonages* in this drama, the *ſatyrs* themſelves. This being premiſed, he conſiders, as was obſerved, what belongs in common to this with the regular

Aut nimium teneris juvenentur verſibus umquam,
Aut inmunda crepent ignominioſaque dicta.
Offenduntur enim, quibus eſt equus, et pater, et
res;
Nec, ſi quid fricti ciceris probat et nucis emtor,
Aequis accipiunt animis, donantve corona.
Syllaba longa brevi ſubjecta, vocatur Iambus,
Pes citus: unde etiam Trimetris adcreſcere juſſit
Nomen Iambeis, cum ſenos redderet ictus
Primus ad extremum ſimilis ſibi: non ita pridem,
Tardior ut paulo graviorque veniret ad auris,
Spondeos ſtabilis in jura paterna recepit
Commodus et patiens: non ut de ſede ſecunda
Cederet, aut quarta ſocialiter. Hic et in Accî
Nobilibus Trimetris apparet rarus, et Ennî.
In ſcenam miſſus cum magno pondere verſus,
Aut operae celeris nimium curaque carentis,
Aut ignoratae premit artis crimine turpi.
Non quivis videt immodulata poëmata judex:
Et data Romanis venia eſt indigna poetis.

COMMENTARY.

regular tragedy [from ℣ 251 to 275] the laws and uſe of the *iambic* foot; reproving, at the ſame time, the indolence or ill-taſte of the Roman writers in this reſpect, and ſending them for inſtruction to the Grecian models.

Having introduced his critique on the *ſtage-muſic*, and *ſatyric drama*, with ſome account of the riſe and progreſs of *each*, the poet very properly concludes this

Idcircone vager, ſcribamque licenter? ut omnis
Viſuros peccata putem mea; tutus et intra
Spem veniae cautus? vitavi denique culpam,
Non laudem merui. Vos exemplaria Graeca
Nocturna verſate manu, verſate diurna.
At veſtri proavi Plautinos et numeros et
Laudavere ſales; nimium patienter utrumque
(Ne dicam ſtulte) mirati: ſi modo ego et vos
Scimus inurbanum lepido ſeponere dicto,
Legitimumque ſonum digitis callemus et aure.
Ignotum tragicae genus inveniſſe Camenae
Dicitur, et plauſtris vexiſſe poëmata Theſpis
Qui canerent agerentque, peruncti faecibus ora.
Poſt hunc perſonae pallaeque repertor honeſtae
Aeſchylos et modicis inſtravit pulpita tignis,
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.

COMMENTARY.

whole part [from ℣ 275 to 295] with a ſhort, incidental hiſtory of the principal improvements of the *Greek tragedy and comedy*; which was artfully contrived to inſinuate the defective ſtate of the Roman drama, and to admoniſh his countrymen, how far they had gone, and what yet remained to complete it. And hence with the advantage of the eaſieſt tranſition he ſlides into the laſt part of the epiſtle; the deſign of which, as hath been obſerved, was to reprove an *incorrectneſs and want of care* in the Roman writers. For, having juſt obſerved their *defect*, he goes on, in the remaining part of the epiſtle, to ſum up the ſeveral cauſes, which ſeem to have produced it. And

Succeſſit vetus his Comoedia, non ſine multa
Laude: ſed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim
Dignam lege regi: lex eſt accepta; choruſque
Turpiter obticuit, ſublato jure nocendi.
Nil intentatum noſtri liquere poëtae:
Nec minimum meruere decus, veſtigia Graeca
Auſi deſerere, et celebrare domeſtica facta,
Vel qui Praetextas, vel qui docuere Togatas.
Nec virtute foret clariſve potentius armis,
Quam lingua, Latium; ſi non offenderet unum-
Quemque poëtarum limae labor et mora. Vos, ô
Pompilius ſanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non
Multa dies et multa litura coërcuit, atque
Praefectum decies non caſtigavit ad unguem.
Ingenium miſera quia fortunatius arte
Credit, et excludit ſanos Helicone poëtas
Democritus; bona pars non unguis ponere curat,

COMMENTARY.

this gives him the opportunity, under every head, of preſcribing the proper remedy for each, and of inſerting ſuch further rules and precepts for good writing, as could not ſo properly come in before. The whole is managed with ſingular addreſs, as will appear from looking over particulars.

## PART III.

### A CARE AND DILIGENCE IN WRITING RECOMMENDED.

I. [from l. 295 to l. 323] THE poet ridicules that falſe notion, into which the Romans had fallen,

Non barbam: ſecreta petit loca, balnea vitat.
Nanciſcetur enim pretium nomenque poëtae,
Si tribus Anticyris caput inſanabile numquam
Tonſori Licino conmiſerit. O ego laevus,
Qui purgor bilem ſub verni temporis horam?
Non alius faceret meliora poëmata: verum
Nil tanti eſt. ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quae ferrum valet, exſors ipſa ſecandi.
Munus et officium, nil ſcribens ipſe, docebo;
Unde parentur opes: quid alat formetque poëtam;
Quid deceat, quid non; quo virtus, quo ferat error.
Scribendi recte, ſapere eſt et principium et fons.
Rem tibi Socraticae poterunt oſtendere chartae:

COMMENTARY.

that *poetry* and *poſſeſſion* were nearly the ſame thing; that nothing more was required in a poet, than ſome extravagant ſtarts and ſallies of thought; that coolneſs and reflexion were inconſiſtent with his character, and that poetry was not to be ſcanned by the rules of ſober ſenſe. This they carried ſo far, as to affect the outward port and air of madneſs, and, upon the ſtrength of that appearance, to ſet up for wits and poets. In oppoſition to this miſtake, which was one great hinderance to critical correctneſs, he aſſerts *wiſdom and good ſenſe to be the ſource and principle of good writing:* for the attainment of which he preſcribes, 1. [from ℣ 310 to 312] A careful ſtudy of the Socratic, that is, moral wiſdom: and, 2. [from ℣ 312 to 318] A thorough acquaintance with human nature, *that great exemplar of manners*, as he finely calls it, or, in

Verbaque proviſam rem non invita ſequentur.
Qui didicit patriae quid debeat, et quid amicis;
Quo ſit amore parens, quo frater amandus et
hoſpes;
Quod ſit conſcripti, quod judicis officium; quae
Partes in bellum miſſi ducis; ille profecto
Reddere perſonae ſcit convenientia cuique.
Reſpicere exemplar vitae morumque jubebo
Doctum imitatorem, et vivas hinc ducere voces.
Interdum ſpecioſa locis, morataque recte

COMMENTARY.

in other words, a wide, extenſive view of real, practical life. The joint direction of theſe two, as means of acquiring moral knowledge, was perfectly neceſſary. For the former, when alone, is apt to grow abſtracted and unaffecting: the latter, uninſtructing and ſuperficial. The philoſopher talks without experience, and the man of the world without principles. United they ſupply each other's defects; while the man of the world borrows ſo much of the philoſopher, as to be able to adjuſt the ſeveral ſentiments with preciſion and exactneſs; and the philoſopher ſo much of the man of the world as to copy the manners of life (which we can only do by experience) with truth and ſpirit. Both together furniſh a thorough and complete comprehenſion of human life; which maniſeſting itſelf in the *juſt*, and *affecting*, forms that exquiſite degree of perfection in the character of the dramatic poet; the want of which no warmth of genius can atone for, or excuſe. Nay ſuch is the force of this nice adjuſtment of *manners* [from l. 319 to

Fabula, nullius veneris, ſine pondere et arte,
Valdius oblectat populum, meliuſque moratur,
Quam verſus inopes rerum, nugaeque canorae.
Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo
Muſa loqui, praeter laudem, nullius avaris.
Romani pueri longis rationibus aſſem
Diſcunt in partis centum diducere. Dicas
Filius Albini, ſi de quincunce remota eſt
Uncia, quid ſuperet. poterat dixiſſe, triens? Eu!
Rem poteris ſervare tuam. Redit uncia: quid fit?
Semis. An haec animos aerugo et cura peculî
Cum ſemel inbuerit, ſperamus carmina fingi
Poſſe linenda cedro, et levi ſervanda cupreſſo?
Aut prodeſſe volunt, aut delectare poëtae;

COMMENTARY.

to 323] that, where it has remarkably prevailed, the ſucceſs of a play hath ſometimes been ſecured by it, without one ſingle excellence or recommendation beſides.

II. He ſhews [from l. 323 to 333] another cauſe of their incorrectneſs and want of ſucceſs, in any degree, anſwering to that of the Greek writers, to have been the low and illiberal education of the Roman youth; who, while the Greeks were taught to open all their mind to glory, were cramped in their genius by the ruſt of gain, and, by the early infuſion of ſuch ſordid principles, became unable to project a great deſign, or with any care and maſtery to complete it.

III. A third impediment to their ſucceſs in poetry [from l. 333 to 346] was their inattention to the *en-*

Aut ſimul et jocunda et idonea dicere vitae.
Quicquid praecipies, eſto brevis: ut cito dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.
[Omne ſupervacuum pleno de pectore manat.]
Ficta voluptatis cauſa ſint proxima veris:
Ne, quodcumque volet, poſcat ſibi fabula credi;
Neu pranſae Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo.
Centuriae ſeniorum agitant expertia frugis:
Celſi praetereunt auſtera poëmata Ramnes.
Omne tulit punctum, qui miſcuit utile dulci,
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.
Hic meret aera liber Soſiis, hic et mare tranſit,
Et longum noto ſcriptori prorogat aevum.

COMMENTARY.

*tire* ſcope and purpoſe of it, while they contented themſelves with the attainment of one only of the two great ends, which are propoſed by it. For the double deſign of poetry being to *inſtruct* and *pleaſe*, the full aim and glory of the art cannot be attained without uniting them both: that is, *inſtructing* ſo as to *pleaſe*, and *pleaſing* ſo as to *inſtruct*. Under either head of *inſtruction* and *entertainment* the poet, with great addreſs, inſinuates the main art of each kind of writing, which conſiſts, 1. in *inſtructive* or *didactic poetry* [from ỳ 335 to 338] in the *conciſeneſs of the precept*: and, 2. in works of *fancy* and *entertainment* [l. 338 to 341] in *probability of fiction*. But both theſe [l. 341 to 347] muſt concur in a juſt piece.

But here the bad poet objects the difficulty of the terms, impoſed upon him, and that, if the critic looked

Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignoviſſe velimus:
Nam neque chorda ſonum reddit, quem volt manus et mens;
Poſcentique gravem perſaepe remittit acutum:
Nec ſemper feriet, quodcumque minabitur, arcus.
Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura. quid ergo eſt?
Ut ſcriptor ſi peccat idem librarius uſque,
Quamvis eſt monitus, venia caret; ut citharoedus
Ridetur, chorda qui ſemper oberrat eadem:
Sic mihi qui multum ceſſat, fit Choerilos ille,
Quem bis terve bonum, cum riſu miror; et idem
Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.
Verum operi longo fas eſt obrepere ſomnum.

COMMENTARY.

looked for all theſe requiſites, and exacted them with rigour, it would be impoſſible to ſatisfy him: at leaſt it was more likely to diſcourage, than quicken, as he propoſed, the diligence of writers. To this the reply is [from l. 347 to 360] that he was not ſo ſevere, as to exact a faultleſs and perfect piece: that ſome inaccuracies and faults of leſs moment would eſcape the moſt cautious and guarded writer; and that, as he ſhould contemn a piece, that was generally bad, notwithſtanding a few beauties, he could, on the contrary, admire a work, that was generally good, notwithſtanding a few faults. Nay, he goes on [from l. 360 to 366] to obſerve in favour of writers, againſt their too rigorous cenſurers, that what were often called

Ut pictura, poëſis: erit quae, ſi propius ſtes,
Te capiat magis; et quaedam, ſi longius abſtes:
Haec amat obſcurum; volet haec ſub luce videri,
Judicis argutum quae non formidat acumen:
Haec placuit ſemel; haec decies repetita placebit.
O major juvenum, quamvis et voce paterna
Fingeris ad rectum, et per te ſapis; hoc tibi dictum
Tolle memor: certis medium et tolerabile rebus
Recte concedi: conſultus juris, et actor
Cauſarum mediocris; abeſt virtute diſerti
Meſſallae, nec ſcit quantum Caſcellius Aulus;

COMMENTARY.

called faults, were really not ſo: that ſome parts of a poem ought to be leſs *ſhining*, or leſs *finiſhed*, than others; according to the light, they were placed in, or the diſtance, from which they were viewed; and that, ſerving only to connect and lead to others of greater conſequence, it was ſufficient if they pleaſed once, or did not diſpleaſe, provided that thoſe others would pleaſe on every review. All this is ſaid agreeably to *nature*, which does not allow every part of a ſubject, to be equally ſuſceptible of ornament; and to the *end of poetry*, which cannot ſo well be attained, without an inequality. The alluſions to painting, which the poet uſes, give this truth the happieſt illuſtration.

Having thus made all the reaſonable allowances, which a writer could expect, he goes on to inforce the general inſtruction of this part, *viz.* a *diligence in writing*, by ſhewing [from l. 366 to 379] that a *mediocrity*,

Sed tamen in pretio eſt: mediocribus eſſe poëtis
Non homines, non Dî, non conceſſere columnae.
Ut gratas inter menſas ſymphonia diſcors,
Et craſſum unguentum, et Sardo cum melle papaver
Offendunt; poterat duci quia coena ſine iſtis:
Sic animis natum inventumque poëma juvandis,
Si paulum ſummo deceſſit, vergit ad imum.
Ludere qui neſcit, campeſtribus abſtinet armis;
Indoctuſque pilae, diſcive, trochive, quieſcit;
Ne ſpiſſae riſum tollant impune coronae:
Qui neſcit verſus, tamen audet fingere. Quid nî?

COMMENTARY.

*diocrity*, however tolerable, or even commendable, it might be in other arts, would never be allowed in this: for which he aſſigns this very obvious and juſt reaſon; that, as the main end of poetry is to *pleaſe*, if it did not reach that point (which it could not do by ſtopping ever ſo little on this ſide excellence) it was, like indifferent muſic, indifferent perfumes, or any other indifferent thing, which we can do without, and whoſe end ſhould be to pleaſe, *offenſive and diſagreeable*, and for want of being very good, abſolutely aud inſufferably bad. This reflexion leads him with great advantage [from l. 379 to 391] to the general concluſion in view, *viz.* that as none but excellent poetry will be allowed, it ſhould be a warning to writers, how they engage in it without abilities; or publiſh without ſevere and frequent correction. But to ſtimulate the poet, who, notwithſtanding the al-

lowances

Liber et ingenuus; praeſertim cenſus equeſtrem
Summam nummorum, vitioque remotus ab omni.
Tu nihil invita dices facieſve Minerva:
Id tibi judicium eſt, ea mens, ſi quid tamen olim
Scripſeris, in Maecî deſcendat judicis auris,
Et patris, et noſtras; nonumque prematur in annum,
Membranis intus poſitis. Delere licebit
Quod non edideris: neſcit vox miſſa reverti.
Silveſtris homines ſacer interpreſque Deorum
Caedibus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus;
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigris rabidoſque leones.

COMMENTARY.

lowances already made, might be ſomething ſtruck with this laſt reflexion, he flings out [from l. 391 to 408] into a fine encomium, on the dignity and excellence of the art itſelf, by recounting its antient honours. This encomium, beſides its great uſefulneſs in invigorating the mind of the poet, has this further view, to recommend and revive, together with its honours, the office of antient poeſy; which was employed about the nobleſt and moſt important ſubjects; the ſacred ſource, from whence thoſe honours were derived.

From this tranſient view of the ſeveral ſpecies of poetry, terminating, as by a beautiful contrivance it is made to do, in the *Ode*, the order of his ideas carries him into ſome reflexions on the power of genius (which ſo eſſentially belongs to the lyric Muſe) and to ſettle thereby a point of criticiſm, much controverted among the antients, and on which a very conſiderable

Dictus et Amphion, Thebanae conditor arcis,
Saxa movere ſono teſtudinis, et prece blanda
Ducere quo vellet. fuit haec ſapientia quondam,
Publica privatis ſecernere, ſacra profanis;
Concubitu prohibere vago; dare jura maritis;
Oppida moliri; leges incidere ligno.
Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque
Carminibus venit. poſt hos inſignis Homerus
Tyrtaeuſque mares animos in Martia bella
Verſibus exacuit. dictae per carmina ſortes,
Et vitae monſtrata via eſt, et gratia regum
Pieriis tentata modis, luduſque repertus,
Et longorum operum finis; ne forte pudori
Sit tibi Muſa lyrae ſolers, et cantor Apollo.
Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,

COMMENTARY.

ſiderable ſtreſs would apparently be laid. For, if after all, ſo much art and care and caution be demanded in poetry, what becomes of genius, in which alone it had been thought to conſiſt? would the critic inſinuate, that good poems can be the ſole effect of art, and go ſo far, in oppoſition to the reigning prejudice, as to aſſert nature to be of no force at all? This objection, which would be apt to occur to the general ſcope and tenor of the epiſtle, as having turned principally on *art* and *rules* without inſiſting much on natural *energy*, the poet obviates at once [from ỳ 408 to 419] by reconciling two things which were held, it ſeems, incompatible, and demanding in the poet, beſides the fire of real genius, all the labour and

Quaeſitum eſt. Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite vena,
Nec rude quid poſſit video ingenium: alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, et conjurat amice.
Qui ſtudet optatam curſu contingere metam,
Multa tulit fecitque puer; ſudavit et alſit;
Abſtinuit venere et vino. qui Pythia cantat
Tibicen, didicit prius, extimuitque magiſtrum.
Nec ſatis eſt dixiſſe, Ego mira poëmata pango:
Occupet extremum ſcabies: mihi turpe relinqui eſt,
Et, quod non didici, ſane neſcire fateri.
Ut praeco, ad merces turbam qui cogit emendas;
Adſentatores jubet ad lucrum ire poëta
Dives agris, dives poſitis in foenore nummis.
Si vero eſt, unctum qui recte ponere poſſit,
Et ſpondere levi pro paupere, et eripere artis

COMMENTARY.

and diſcipline of art. But there is one thing ſtill wanting. The poet may be excellently formed by nature, and accompliſhed by art, but will his own judgment be a ſufficient guide, without aſſiſtance from others? will not the partiality of an author for his own works ſometimes prevail over the united force of rules and genius, unleſs he call in a fairer and leſs intereſted guide? Doubtleſs it will: and therefore the poet, with the utmoſt propriety, adds [from ỷ 419 to 450] as a neceſſary part of this inſtructive monition to his brother poets, ſome directions concerning the choice of a prudent and ſincere friend, whoſe unbyaſſed ſenſe might at all times correct the prejudices, indiſcretions, and overſights of the au-

Litibus inplicitum; mirabor, ſi ſciet inter-
Noſcere mendacem verumque beatus amicum.
Tu ſeu donaris ſeu quid donare voles cui;
Nolito ad verſus tibi factos ducere plenum
Laetitiae; clamabit enim, Pulchre, bene, recte!
Palleſcet; ſuper his etiam ſtillabit amicis
Ex oculis rorem; ſaliet; tundet pede terram.
Ut qui conducti plorant in funere, dicunt
Et faciunt prope plura dolentibus ex animo: ſic
Deriſor vero plus laudatore movetur.
Reges dicuntur multis urguere culullis,
Et torquere mero quem perſpexiſſe laborant
An ſit amicitia dignus. ſi carmina condes,
Nunquam te fallant animi ſub volpe latentes.
Quintilio ſi quid recitares: Corrige ſodes
Hoc, aiebat, et hoc. melius te poſſe negares,
Bis terque expertum fruſtra? delere jubebat,
Et male ter natos incudi reddere verſus.

COMMENTARY.

thor. And to impreſs this neceſſary care, with greater force, on the poet, he cloſes the whole with ſhewing the dreadful conſequences of being impoſed upon in ſo nice an affair; repreſenting, in all the ſtrength of colouring, the picture of a bad poet, infatuated, to a degree of madneſs, by a fond conceit of his own works, and expoſed thereby (ſo important had been the ſervice of timely advice) to the contempt and ſcorn of the public.

And now, an unity of deſign in this epiſtle, and the pertinent connection of its ſeveral parts being, it is

Si defendere delictum, quam vertere, malles;
Nullum ultra verbum, aut operam inſumebat inanem,
Quin ſine rivali teque et tua ſolus amares.
Vir bonus et prudens verſus reprehendet inertis;
Culpabit duros; incomptis adlinet atrum
Tranſverſo calamo ſignum; ambitioſa recidet
Ornamenta; parum claris lucem dare coget;
Arguet ambigue dictum; mutanda notabit;
Fiet Ariſtarchus; non dicet, Cur ego amicum
Offendam in nugis? Hae nugae ſeria ducent
In mala deriſum ſemel, exceptumque ſiniſtre.
Ut mala quem ſcabies aut morbus regius urguet,
Aut fanaticus error, et iracunda Diana;
Veſanum tetigiſſe timent fugiuntque poëtam,
Qui ſapiunt: agitant pueri, incautique ſequuntur.
Hic, dum ſublimis verſus ructatur, et errat,
Si veluti merulis intentus decidit auceps

COMMENTARY.

preſumed, from this method of illuſtration, clearly and indiſputably ſhewn, what muſt we think of the celebrated FRENCH interpreter of Horace, who, after a ſtudied tranſlation of this piece, ſupported by a long, elaborate commentary, minutely condeſcending to ſcrutinize each part, could yet perceive ſo little of its true form and character, as to give it for his ſummary judgment, in concluſion; "*Comme il* [Horace] *ne travailloit pas à cela de ſuite et qu'il ne gardoit d'autre ordre que celui des matieres que le hazard lui donnoit à lire et à examiner, il eſt arrivé delà qu'* IL N'Y A AUCUNE

In puteum, foveamve; licet, Succurrite, longum
Clamet, io cives: non ſit qui tollere curet.
Si curet quis opem ferre, et demittere funem;
Quî ſcis, an prudens huc ſe projecerit, atque
Servari nolit? dicam: Siculique poëtae
Narrabo interitum. Deus inmortalis haberi
Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Aetnam
Inſiluit. ſit jus, liceatque perire poëtis.
Invitum qui ſervat, idem facit occidenti.
Nec ſemel hoc fecit; nec ſi retractus erit jam,
Fiet homo, et ponet famoſae mortis amorem.
Nec ſatis adparet, cur verſus factitet; utrum
Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triſte bidental
Moverit inceſtus: certe furit, ac velut urſus
Objectos caveae valuit ſi frangere clathros,
Indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus.
Quem vero arripuit, tenet, occiditque legendo,
Non miſſura cutem, niſi plena cruoris, hirudo.

COMMENTARY.

METHODE NI AUCUNE LIAISON DE PARTIES DANS CE TRAITÉ, *qui même n'a jamais été achevé, Horace n'ayant pas eu le tems d'y mettre la derniere main, ou, ce qui eſt plus vraiſemblable, n'ayant pas voulu s'en donner la peine.*" [M. Dacier's Introd. remarks to the art of poetry.] The ſofteſt thing that can be ſaid of ſuch a critic, is, that he well deſerves the cenſure, he ſo juſtly applied to the great Scaliger, S'IL L'AVOIT BIEN ENTENDU, IL LUI AUROIT RENDU PLUS DE JUSTICE, ET EN AUROIT PARLÉ PLUS MODESTEMENT.

NOTES

# NOTES

ON THE

# ART OF POETRY.

# NOTES
## ON THE
# ART OF POETRY.

THE text of this epiſtle is given from Dr. BENTLEY's edition, except in ſome few places, of which the reader is advertized in the notes. Theſe, that they might not break in too much on the thread of the Commentary, are here printed by themſelves. For the reſt, let me apologize with a great critic: *Nobis viri docti ignoſcent, ſi hæc fuſius: præſertim ſi cogitent, veri critici eſſe, non literulam alibi ejicere, alibi innocentem ſyllabam et quæ nunquàm male merita de patria fuerit, per jocum et ludum trucidare et configere; verùm recte de autoribus et rebus judicare, quod et ſolidæ et abſolutæ eruditionis eſt.* HEINSIUS.

1. HUMANO CAPITI, &c.] It is ſeen, in the comment, with what elegance this firſt part [to ℣ 89] is made preparatory to the main ſubject, agreeably to the genius of the Epiſtle. But elegance, in good hands, always implies *pro-*

*priety*; as is the caſe here. For the critic's rules muſt be taken either 1. from the *general* ſtanding laws of compoſition; or, 2. from the peculiar ones, appropriated to the *kind.* Now the direction to be fetched from the former of theſe ſources will of courſe *precede*, as well on account of its ſuperior dignity, as that the mind itſelf delights to deſcend from *univerſals* to the conſideration of *particulars*. Agreeably to this rule of nature, the poet, having to correct, in the Roman drama, theſe three points, 1. a miſconduct in the diſpoſition; 2. an abuſe of language; and, 3. a diſregard of the peculiar characters and *colourings* of its different ſpecies, hath choſen to do this on principles of univerſal nature; which, while they include the caſe of the drama, at the ſame time extend to poetic compoſition at large. Theſe prefatory, univerſal obſervations being delivered, he then proceeds, with advantage, to the *ſecond* ſource of his art, viz. the conſideration of the laws and rules peculiar to the *kind.*

9. —PICTORIBUS ATQUE POETIS—QUIDLIBET AUDENDI SEMPER FUIT AEQUA POTETAS.] The *modern* painter and poet will obſerve that this aphoriſm comes from the mouth of an objector.

14. IN-

14. INCEPTIS GRAVIBUS, &c.] Theſe preparatory obſervations concerning the laws of poetic compoſition at large have been thought to glance more *particularly* at the epic poetry: Which was not improper: For, 1. The *drama*, which he was about to criticiſe, had its riſe and origin from the *epos*. Thus we are told by the great critic, that Homer was the firſt who *invented dramatic imitations*, μόνος—ὅτι μιμήσεις δραματικὰς ἐποίησε. And to the ſame purpoſe Plato: ἔοικε μὲν τῶν καλῶν ἁπάντων τούτων τῶν τραγικῶν πρῶτος διδάσκαλος καὶ ἡγεμὼν γενέσθαι [Ὅμηρος.] *De Rep.* l. x. Hence, as our noble critic obſerves, "There was no more left for tragedy to "do after him, than to erect a ſtage, and draw "his dialogues and characters into ſcenes; "turning in the ſame manner upon one princi-"pal action or event, with regard to place and "time, which was ſuitable to a real ſpectacle." [*Characteriſt.* vol. i. p. 198.] 2. The ſeveral cenſures, here pointed at the epic, would bear ſtill more directly againſt the tragic poem; it being more glaringly inconſiſtent with the genius of the *drama* to admit of foreign and digreſſive ornaments, than of the extended, epiſodical *epopœia*. For both theſe reaſons it was altogether pertinent to the poet's purpoſe, in a criticiſm on the *drama*, to expoſe the vicious practice of the *epic* models. Though, to preſerve the unity of

his piece, and for the reaſon before given in note on ℣ 1. he hath artfully done this under the cover of *general* criticiſm.

19. Sed nunc non erat his locus.] If one was to apply this obſervation to our dramatic writings, I know of none which would afford pleaſanter inſtances of the abſurdity, here expoſed, than the famous Orphan of Otway. Which, notwithſtanding its real beauties, could hardly have taken ſo prodigiouſly, as it hath done, on our ſtage, if there were not ſomewhere a defect of *good taſte* as well as of *good morals*.

23. Denique sit quidvis: simplex duntaxat et unum.] Is not it ſtrange that he, who delivered this rule in form, and, by his manner of delivering it, appears to have laid the greateſt ſtreſs upon it, ſhould be thought capable of paying no attention to it himſelf, in the conduct of this epiſtle?

25—28. Brevis esse laboro, Obscurus fio: sectantem lenia nervi Deficiunt animique: professus grandia turget: Serpit humi tutus nimium timidusque procellae.] If theſe characters were to be exemplified in our own poets, of reputation, the *firſt*, I ſuppoſe, might be juſtly applied to Donne; the

the *ſecond*, to Parnelle; the *third*, to Thompſon; and the *fourth*, to Addiſon. As to the two following lines:

*Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,*
*Delphinum ſilvis adpingit, fluctibus aprum:*

they are applicable to ſo many of our poets, that, to keep the reſt in countenance, I will but juſt mention Shakeſpeare himſelf; who, to enrich his ſcene with that *variety*, which his exuberant genius ſo largely ſupplied, hath deformed his beſt plays with theſe *prdigious* incongruities.

29. QUI VARIARE CUPIT REM PRODIGIALITER UNAM, &c.] Though I agree with M. Dacier that *prodigialiter* is here uſed in a good ſenſe, yet the word is ſo happily choſen by our *curious ſpeaker* as to carry the mind to that fictitious monſter, under which he had before alluſively ſhadowed out the idea of aburd and inconſiſtent compoſition, in ℣ 1. The application, however, differs in this, that, whereas the monſter, there painted, was intended to expoſe the extravagance of putting together *incongruous parts*, without any reference to a *whole*, this *prodigy* is deſigned to characterize a *whole*, but deformed by the ill-judged *poſition* of its *parts*. The former is like a monſter, whoſe ſeveral members, as of right belonging to different animals, could, by no diſpoſition, be made to conſtitute

ſtitute *one* conſiſtent animal. The other, like a landſkip, which hath no objects abſolutely *irrelative*, or irreducible to a *whole*, but which a wrong poſition of the *parts* only renders *prodigious*. Send the *boar to the woods*; and the *dolphin to the waves*; and the painter might ſhew them both on the ſame canvaſs.

Each is a violation of the law of unity, and a real *monſter*: the one, becauſe it contains an aſſemblage of naturally *incoherent parts*; the other, becauſe its parts, though in themſelves *coherent*, are *miſplaced*, and disjointed.

34. Infelix operis summa: quia ponere totum nesciet.] This obſervation is more peculiarly applicable to *dramatic* poetry, than to any other, an unity and integrity of action being of its very eſſence.—The poet illuſtrates his obſervation very happily in the caſe of *ſtatuary*; but it holds of every other art, that hath a *whole* for its object. *Nicias*, the painter, uſed to ſay [*a*], "That the *ſubject* was to him, what the fable is to the poet." Which is juſt the ſentiment of *Horace*, reverſed. For by the *ſubject* is meant the whole of the painter's plan, the *totum*, which it will be impoſſible for thoſe to expreſs, who lay out their pains ſo ſollicitouſly in finiſh-

[*a*] See *Victor. Comm. in Dem. Phaler*. p. 73. *Florent.* 1594.

ing

ing ſingle parts. Thus, to take an obvious example, the landſkip-painter is to draw together, and form into *one* entire view, certain beautiful, or ſtriking objects. This is his main care. It is not even eſſential to the merit of his piece, to labour, with extreme exactneſs, the *principal* conſtituent parts. But for the reſt, a *ſhrub* or *flower*, a ſtraggling *goat* or *ſheep*, theſe may be touched very negligently. We have a great modern inſtance. Few painters have obliged us with *finer* ſcenes, or have poſſeſſed the art of combining *woods*, *lakes*, and *rocks*, into more agreeable pictures, than G. POUSSIN: Yet his *animals* are obſerved to be ſcarce worthy an ordinary artiſt. The uſe of theſe *is ſimply* to decorate the ſcene; and ſo their beauty depends, not on the truth and correctneſs of the *drawing*, but on the elegance of their *diſpoſition* only. For, in a landſkip, the eye careleſly glances over the ſmaller parts, and regards them only in reference to the ſurrounding objects. The painter's labour therefore is loſt, or rather miſemployed, to the prejudice of the *whole*, when it ſtrives to finiſh, ſo minutely, *particular* objects. If ſome great maſters have ſhewn themſelves ambitious of this fame, the objects, they have laboured, have been always ſuch, as are moſt conſiderable in themſelves, and have, beſides, an *effect* in illuſtrating and ſetting off the entire ſcenery. It is chiefly

in

in this view, that Ruiſdale's *waters*, and Claude Lorain's *ſkies* are ſo admirable.

40.—CUI LECTA POTENTER ERIT RES.] *Potenter*, i. e. κατὰ δύναμιν, *Lambin:* which gives a pertinent ſenſe, but without juſtifying the expreſſion. The learned editor of Statius propoſes to read *pudenter*, a word uſed by Horace on other occaſions, and which ſuits the meaning of the place, as well. A ſimilar paſſage in the epiſtle to Auguſtus adds ſome weight to this conjecture;

*nec meus audet*
REM *tentare* PUDOR, *quam vires ferre recuſent.*

45. HOC AMET, HOC SPERNAT, PROMISSI CARMINIS AUCTOR—IN VERBIS ETIAM TENUIS CAUTUSQUE SERENDIS.] Dr. Bentley hath inverted the order of theſe two lines; not merely, as I conceive, without ſufficient reaſon, but in prejudice alſo to the ſcope and tenor of the poet's ſenſe; in which caſe only I allow myſelf to depart from his text. The whole precept, on poetical diſtribution, is delivered, as of importance:

[*Ordinis haec virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor.*]

And ſuch indeed it is: for 1. It reſpects no leſs than the conſtitution of a *whole*, i. e. the reduction of a ſubject into one entire, conſiſtent plan,

plan, the moſt momentous and difficult of all the offices of *invention*, and which is more immediately addreſſed, in the high and ſublime ſenſe of the word, to the POET. 2. 'Tis no trivial *whole*, which the Precept had in view, but, as the context ſhews, and as is further apparent from ℣ 150, where this topic is reſumed and treated more at large, the *epos* and the *drama*. With what propriety then is a rule of ſuch dignity inforced by that ſtrong emphatic concluſion,

*Hoc amet, hoc ſpernat promiſſi carminis auctor:*

*i. e.* "Be this rule held ſacred and inviolate by "him, who hath projected and engaged in a "work, deſerving the appellation of a poem." Were the ſubject only the choice or invention of *words*, the ſolemnity of ſuch an application muſt be ridiculous.

As for the conſtruction, the commoneſt reader can find himſelf at no loſs to defend it againſt the force of the Doctor's objections.

46. IN VERBIS ETIAM TENUIS, &c.] I have ſaid, that theſe preparatory obſervations concerning an *unity* of deſign, the *abuſe of language*, and the different *colorings* of the ſeveral ſpecies of poetry, whilſt they extend to poetic compoſition at *large*, more particularly reſpect the caſe of the *drama*. The *firſt* of theſe articles has been illuſtrated

luſtrated in note on ✝ 34. The *laſt* will be conſidered in note ✝ 73. I will here ſhew the ſame of the *ſecond*, concerning the *abuſe of words*. For 1. the ſtyle of the drama repreſenting real life, and demanding, on that account, a peculiar eaſe and familiarity in the language, the practice of coining *new* words muſt be more inſufferable in *this*, than in any other ſpecies of poetry. The majeſty of the epic will even ſometimes require to be ſupported by this means, when the commoneſt ear would reſent it, as downright affectation upon the ſtage. Hence the peculiar propriety of this rule to the dramatic writer,

*In verbis etiam tenuis cautuſque ſerendis.*

2. Next, it is neceſſary to keep the tragic ſtyle, though condeſcending, in ſome ſort, to the familiar caſt of converſation, from ſinking beneath the dignity of the perſonages, and the ſolemnity of the repreſentation. Now no expedient can more happily effect this, than what the poet preſcribes concerning the *poſition* and *derivation* of words. For thus, the language, without incurring the odium of abſolutely *invented* terms, ſuſtains itſelf in a becoming ſtatelineſs and reſerve, and, whilſt it ſeems to ſtoop to the level of converſation, artfully eludes the meanneſs of a trite, proſaic ſtyle.—There are wonderful inſtances of this management in the *Samſon Agoniſtes*

*ſtes* of Milton; the moſt artificial and highly finiſhed, though for that reaſon, perhaps, the leaſt popular and moſt neglected, of all the great Poet's works.

47. Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum Reddiderit junctura novum.—] This direction, about *diſpoſing* of old words in ſuch a manner as that they ſhall have the grace of *new* ones, is among the fineſt in the whole poem. And becauſe Shakeſpear is he, of all our poets, who has moſt ſucceſsfully practiſed this ſecret, it may not be amiſs to illuſtrate the precept before us by examples taken from his writings.

But firſt it will be proper to explain the *precept* itſelf as given by Horace.

His critics ſeem not at all to have apprehended the force of it. Dacier and Sanadon, the two beſt of them, confine it merely to the formation of *compound words*; which, though *one* way in which this *callida junctura* ſhews itſelf, is by no means the whole of what the poet intended by it.

Their miſtake aroſe from interpreting the word *junctura* too ſtrictly. They ſuppoſe it to mean only the *putting together two words into one*; this being the moſt obvious idea we have of the *joining of words*. As if the moſt *literal* conſtruction

of terms, according to their etymology, were always the moſt proper.

But Mr. Dacier has a reaſon of his own for confining the precept to this meaning. "The queſtion, he ſays, is *de verbis ſerendis*; and therefore this *junctura* muſt be explained of *new* words, properly ſo called, as compound epithets are; and not of the grace of novelty which ſingle words ſeem to acquire from the art of diſpoſing of them."

By which we underſtand, that the learned critic did not perceive the ſcope of his author; which was manifeſtly this. "The invention of "new terms, ſays he, being a matter of much "nicety, I had rather you would contrive to em"ploy known words in ſuch a way as to give "them the effect of new ones. 'Tis true, new "words may ſometimes be neceſſary: And if "ſo," &c. Whence we ſee that the line,

*In verbis etiam tenuis cautuſque ſerendis*

is not given here in form as the *general rule*, and the following line, as the *example*. On the other hand, the rule is juſt mentioned careleſly and in paſſing, while the poet is haſtening to another conſideration of more importance, and which he even *oppoſes* to the former. "Inſtead "of making new words, you will do well to "confine yourſelf merely to old ones." Whatever

ever then be the meaning of *junctura*, it is clear we are not to explain it of ſuch words as exemplify the rule *de verbis ſerendis*.

But *junctura* will beſt be interpreted by the *uſage* of Horace together with the *context*; 1. The word occurs only once more in this poet, and that in this very Epiſtle. It is where he adviſes a conduct with regard to the *ſubject-matter* of a poem, analogous to this concerning the *language* of it.

*Ex noto fictum carmen ſequar*—
—— *tantum ſeries juncturaque pollet*. ℣ 242.

Does he mean *the joining two ſubjects together* and combining them into *one*, ſo as that the *compound* ſubject ſhall be a *new* one? No ſuch thing; "The ſubject, ſays he, ſhall be a *known*, an old one. Yet the *order*, *management and contrivance* ſhall be ſuch as to give it the air of an original fiction." Apply now this ſenſe of *junctura* to words, and we are only told, that expreſſion may be ſo *ordered* as to appear new, when the words, of which it is made up, are all known and common.

We have then the authority of the poet himſelf againſt the opinion of the French critic. But we have alſo the authority of his great imitator, or rather interpreter, Perſius; who ſpeaking of the language of his ſatires ſays, in alluſion to this paſſage of Horace,

"*Verba togæ ſequeris*, juncturâ callidus *acri.*
S. v. 14.

i. e. he took up with words of common and familiar uſe, but contrived to bring them into his ſtyle in ſuch a manner as to give them the force, ſpirit, and energy of ſatiric expreſſion."

2. Again: the context, as I obſerved, leads us to this meaning. The poet in ỳ 42. had been giving his opinion of the nature and effect of *method*, or orderly diſpoſition in the conduct of a *fable*. The courſe of his ideas carries him to apply the obſervation to *words*; which he immediately does, only interpoſing ỳ 46. by way of introduction to it.

On the whole then *junctura* is a word of large and general import, and the ſame in *expreſſion*, as *order or diſpoſition*, in a *ſubject*. The poet would ſay, "Inſtead of framing new words, I recommend to you *any* kind of artful management by which you may be able to give a new air and caſt to old ones."

Having now got at the true meaning of the precept, let us ſee how well it may be exemplified in the practice of Shakeſpear.

1. The firſt example of this *artful management*, if it were only in complaiſance to former com-

mentators, ſhall be that of *compound epithets*; of which ſort are,

| | |
|---|---|
| *High-ſighted Tyranny* | J. C. A. II. S. 2. |
| *A barren-ſpirited fellow* | A. IV. S. 1. |
| *An arm-gaunt ſteed* | A. C. A. I. S. 6. |
| *Flower-ſoft hands* | A. II. S. 3. |
| *Lazy-pacing clouds* | R. J. A. II. S. 2. |

and a thouſand inſtances more in this poet. But this is a ſmall part of his *craft*, as may be ſeen by what follows. For this end is attained,

2. *By another form of compoſition*; by compound *verbs* as well as compound *adjectives*.

To *candy* and *limn* are known words. The poet would expreſs the contrary ideas, and he does it happily, by compounding them with our Engliſh negative *dis*,

——" The hearts
That pantler'd me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wiſhes, do *discandy*, melt their ſweets
On bloſſoming Cæſar — A. C. A. IV. S. 9.

" That which is now a horſe, ev'n with a thought
The rack *dislimns*, and makes it indiſtinct
As water is in water — A. C. A. IV. S. 10.

Though here we may obſerve, that for the readier acceptation of theſe compounds, he artfully ſubjoins the explanation.

3. By a liberty he takes of converting *ſubſtantives* into *verbs*;

A glaſs that *featur'd* them Cymb. A. I. S. I,
—— Simon's weeping
Did *ſcandal* many a holy tear— A. III. S. 4,
Great griefs, I ſee, *medicine* the leſs. A. IV. S. 5,
——that kiſs
I carried from thee, Dear; and my true lip
Hath *virgin'd* it e'er ſince— Cor. A. V. S. 3,

Or *verbs* into *ſubſtantives*;

——Then began
A ſtop i' th' chaſer, a *Retire*— Cymb. A. V. S. 2,
——take
No ſtricter *render* of me— A. V. S. 3,
——handkerchief
Still waving, as the fits and *ſtirs* of's mind
Could beſt expreſs— Cymb. A. I. S. 5,
—— Sextus Pompeius
Hath giv'n the *dare* to Cæſar— A. C. A. I. S. 3,

4. By uſing *active* verbs neutrally,

——He hath fought to-day
As if a god in hate of mankind had
*Deſtroy'd*, in ſuch a ſhape— A. C. A. IV. S. 6,
It is the bloody buſineſs, that *informs*
Thus to mine eyes— Macb. A. II. S. 2,

And *neutral* verbs actively.

——never man
Sigh'd truer breath; but that I ſee thee here,

Thou

Thou noble thing! more *dances* my rapt heart
Than when I firſt my wedded miſtreſs ſaw
Beſtride my threſhold— Cor. A. IV. S. 4.
——like ſmiling Cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whoſe wind did ſeem
To *glow* the delicate cheeks which they did cool—
A. C. A. II. S. 3.

5. By converting *Adjectives* into Subſtantives.

——I do not think
So fair an *outward* and ſuch ſtuff within
Endows a man but him— Cymb. A. I. S. I.

6. By converting *Participles* into Subſtantives.

He would have well become this place, and grac'd
The *thankings* of a King— Cymb. A. V. S. 5.
The herbs, that have in them cold dew o' th' night
Are *ſtrewings* fitt'ſt for Graves— A. IV. S. 5.
——" Then was I as a tree
Whoſe boughs did bend with fruit. But, in one
night,
A ſtorm, or robbery, call it what you will,
Shook down my mellow *hangings*——
Cymb. A. III. S. 3.
——Comes in my father,
And like the tyrannous *breathing* of the North
Shakes all our Buds from blowing——
Cymb. A. I. S. 5.

Which laſt inſtance I the rather give for the ſake of propoſing an emendation, which I think reſtores this fine paſſage to its Integrity. Before the late edition of Shakeſpear it ſtood thus,

And like the tyrannous breathing of the North
Shakes all our Buds from *growing*—

But the ſagacious Editor ſaw that this reading was corrupt, and therefore altered the laſt word, *growing*, for unanſwerable reaſons, into *blowing*. See Mr. W's. note upon the place. This ſlight change gives propriety and beauty to the paſſage, which before had no ſort of meaning. Yet ſtill all is not quite right. For, as the great Critic himſelf obſerves, "*Breathing* is not a very proper word to expreſs the rage and bluſter of the north wind." Beſides, one does not ſee how the *ſhaking* of theſe Buds is properly aſſign'd as the cauſe of their not blowing. The wind might ſhake off the *bloſſoms* of a fruit-tree, i. e. the Buds when they were *full-blown*; but ſo long as the bloſſom lies folded up in the Bud, it ſeems ſecure from ſhaking. At leaſt the *ſhaking* is not the *immediate* cauſe of the effect, ſpoken of; it is ſimply the *cold* of the north-wind that cloſes the Bud and keeps it from *blowing*. I am therefore tempted to propoſe another alteration of the text, and to read thus,

And

And like the tyrannous Breathing of the North
*Shuts* all our Buds from blowing—

If this correction be allowed, every thing is perfectly right. It is properly the *breathing*, the cold breath of the North, that ſhuts up the Buds when they are on the point of blowing. Whence the epithet *tyrannous* will be underſtood not as implying the idea of *bluſt'ring* (an idea indeed neceſſary if we retain the word *ſhakes)* but ſimply of *cruel*, the *tyranny* of this wind conſiſting in impriſoning the flower in its Bud and denying it the liberty of coming out into *Bloſſom*. The application too of this compariſon, which required the change of *growing* into *blowing*, ſeems alſo to require the preſent alteration of *ſhakes*. For there was no manner of violence in *the father's* coming in upon the lovers. All the effect was, that his preſence *reſtrained* them from that interchange of tender words, which was going to take place between them.

Thus far I had written in the laſt edition of theſe notes, and I, now, ſee no cauſe to doubt the *general* truth and propriety of this emendation. Only it occurs to me that, inſtead of SHUTS, the poet's own word might, perhaps, be CHECKS; as not only being more like in *ſound* to the word *ſhakes*, but as coming neerer to the

traces

*traces* of the Letters. Beſides, CHECKS gives the preciſe idea we ſhould naturally look for, whether we regard the integrity of the *figure*—*tyrannous*—*checks*—, or the *thing* illuſtrated by it, viz. the abrupt coming in of the father, which was properly a *check* upon the lovers. Laſtly, the expreſſion is mended by this reading; for though we may be allowed to ſay *ſhuts from blowing*, yet *checks from blowing*, is eaſier and better Engliſh.

But to return to other Inſtances of the Poet's artifice in the management of *known* words. An apparent Novelty is ſometimes effected

7. By turning *Participles* into Adverbs—

——*tremblingly* ſhe ſtood
Aud on the ſudden dropt— A. C. A. v. S. 5.

(One remembers the fine uſe Mr. Pope has made of this word in,

Or touch, if *tremblingly* alive all o'er—)

——But his flaw'd heart,
Alack, too weak the conflict to ſupport,
'Twixt two extremes of Paſſion, joy and grief,
Burſt *ſmilingly*— Lear, A. v. S. 8.

8. By *figurative terms*; i. e. by ſuch terms as though common in the *plain*, are unuſual in the figurative application.

4 —This

——This common Body
Like to a vagabond flag, upon the ſtream,
Goes to, and back, *lacquying* the varying tide.
A. C. A. I. S. 5.
——When ſnow the Paſture *ſheets*. ib.

To this head may be referred thoſe innumerable terms in Shakeſpear which ſurprize us by their novelty; and which ſurprize us generally, on account of his preferring the *ſpecific* idea to the *general* in the *ſubjects* of his Metaphors and the *circumſtances* of his Deſcription; an excellence in poetical expreſſion which cannot be ſufficiently ſtudied. The examples are too frequent, and the thing itſelf too well underſtood, to make it neceſſary to enlarge on this article.

9. By *plain words*, i. e. ſuch as are common in the figurative, uncommon in the literal acceptation.

*Diſaſters* vail'd the Sun— Ham. A. I. S. I.
See the note on the place.

Th' *extravagant* and erring ſpirit hies
To his confine— ib.

——Can't ſuch things be
And *overcome* us, like a Summer's cloud,
Without our ſpecial wonder?—
Macb. A. III. S. 5.

10. By

10. By *tranſpoſition of words—unauthoriz'd uſe of terms—and ungrammatical conſtruction.* Inſtances in all his plays, *paſſim.*

11. By *foreign idioms.* 'Tis true theſe are not frequent in Shakeſpear. Yet ſome Latiniſms and e'en Greciſms we have. As

*Quenched of hope*— Cymb. A. v. S. 5.

And the like. But, which is more remarkable and ſerved his purpoſe juſt as well, the writers of that time had ſo *latiniz'd* the Engliſh language; that the pure *Engliſh* Idiom, which Shakeſpear generally follows, has all the air of *novelty* which other writers are uſed to affect by a foreign phraſeology.

The Reader ſees, it were eaſy to extend this liſt of Shakeſpear's arts in the *Callida junctura* much farther. But I intended only a ſpecimen of them; ſo much as might ſerve to illuſtrate the rule of Horace.

It is enough, that we have now a perfect apprehenſion of what is meant by CALLIDA JUNCTURA; And that it is, in effect, but another word for *Licentious Expreſſion:* The uſe of which is, as Quintilian well expreſſes it, "*Ut quotidiani et ſemper eodem modo formati ſermonis Faſtidium levet, et nos à vulgari dicendi genere defendat.*" In ſhort, the articles, here enumerated,

rated, are but ſo many ways of departing from the uſual and ſimpler forms of ſpeech, without neglecting too much the grace of eaſe and perſpicuity; In which well-tempered licence one of the greateſt charms of all poetry, but eſpecially of Shakeſpear's poetry, conſiſts. Not that He was always and every where ſo happy, as in the inſtances given above. His expreſſion ſometimes, and by the very means, here exemplified, becomes *hard*, *obſcure*, and *unnatural*. This is the extreme on the other ſide. But in general, we may ſay, that He hath either followed the direction of Horace very ably, or hath hit upon his Rule very happily.

We are not perhaps to expect the ſame ability, or good fortune from others. *Novelty* is a charm which nothing can excuſe the want of, in works of entertainment. And the neceſſity of preventing the tedium ariſing from *hacknied expreſſion* is ſo inſtant, that thoſe, who are neither capable of preſcribing to themſelves this Rule of the *callida Junctura*, or of following it when preſcribed by others, are yet inclined to ape it by ſome ſpurious contrivance; which being ſlight in itſelf will ſoon become liable to exceſs and ridiculous by its abſurdity. I have a remarkable inſtance in view, with which the reader will not be diſpleaſed that I conclude this long note.

About

About the middle of the laſt century one of the moſt common of theſe mimic efforts was the endleſs multiplication of *Epithets*; which ſoon made their poetry at once both ſtiff and nerveleſs. When frequent and exceſſive uſe had made this expedient ridiculous as well as cheap, they tried another, it's very oppoſite *the rejection of all Epithets*; and ſo of languid poetry, made rigid Proſe. This too had it's day. A dramatic Poet of that time has expoſed theſe oppoſite follies with much humour. A character of ſenſe and pleaſantry is made to interrogate a Poetaſter in the following manner.

GOLDSWORTH.

Maſter CAPERWIT, before you read, pray tell me,
Have your verſes any ADJECTIVES?

CAPERWIT.

Adjectives! Would you have a poem without
Adjectives? They are the flow'rs, the grace of all
our language;
A well-choſen Epithete doth give new Soule
To fainting Poeſie; and makes everye verſe
A Bribe. With adjectives we baite our lines,
When we do fiſh for Gentlewomen's loves,
And with their ſweetneſs catch the nibbling ear
Of amorous Ladies: With the muſic of
Theſe raviſhing Nouns, we charm the ſilken tribe,
And

And make the Gallant melt with apprehenſion
Of the rare word: I will maintain 't (againſt
A bundle of Grammarians) in Poetry
The Subſtantive itſelf cannot ſubſiſt
Without an Adjective.

GOLDSWORTH.

But for all that,
Theſe words would ſound more full, methinks, that are not
So larded: and, if I might counſel you,
You ſhould compoſe a Sonnet, cleane without them.
A row of ſtately SUBSTANTIVES would march,
Like Switzers, and bear all the field before them;
Carry their weight, ſhew fair, like DEEDS enroll'd;
Not WRITS, that are firſt made, and after fill'd:
Thence firſt came up the title of BLANK verſe.
You know, Sir, what *Blank* ſignifies? When the Senſe
Firſt fram'd, is tied with adjectives, like Points,
And could not hold together, without wedges.
Hang't, 'tis Pedanticke, vulgar Poetry.
Let children, when they verſifye, ſticke here
And there theſe pidling words, for want of matter;
POETS write maſculine numbers.

CAPERWIT.

CAPERWIT.

You have given me a pretty hint: 'Tis NEW.
I will beſtow theſe verſes on my footman;
They'll ſerve a Chambermaid—
SHIRLEY's *Chances, or Love in a Maze.*

54. CÆCILIO PLAUTOQUE DABIT ROMANUS, ADEMPTUM VIRGILIO VARIOQUE?] The queſtion is but reaſonable. Yet the anſwer will not be to the ſatisfaction of him that puts it. This humour, we may obſerve, holds here in England, as it did formerly at Rome; and will, I ſuppoſe, hold every-where, under the ſame circumſtances. Cæcilius and Plautus were allowed to *coin*, but not Virgil and Varius. The ſame indulgence our authors had at the reſtoration of letters; but it is denied to our preſent writers. The reaſon is plainly this. While arts are refining or reviving, the greater part are forced, and *all* are content to be *Learners*. When they are grown to their uſual height, all affect to be *Teachers*. With this affectation, a certain envy, as the poet obſerves,

—— *cur adquirere pauca,*
*Si poſſum,* invideor—

inſinuates itſelf; which is for reſtraining the privileges of writers, to all of whom every reader is

is now become a Rival. Whereas men, under the firſt character of *Learners*, are glad to encourage every thing that makes for their inſtruction.

But whatever offence may be taken at this practice, good writers, as they ſafely may, ſhould *dare* to venture upon it. A perfect language is a chimæra. In every ſtate of it there will frequently be occaſion, ſometimes a neceſſity, to hazard a *new* word. And let not a great genius be diſcouraged, by the faſtidious delicacy of his age, from a ſober uſe of this privilege. Let him, as the poet directs,

Command *old* words, that long have ſlept, to wake,
Words, that wiſe BACON, or brave RALEGH ſpake;
Or bid the *new* be Engliſh ages hence,
For USE will father what's begot by SENSE.

This too was the conſtant language of antient criticiſm. "Audendum tamen; namque, ut ait Cicero, etiam quæ primò dura viſa ſunt, uſu molliuntur." *Quintil.* l. i. c. v.

70. MULTA RENASCENTUR, QUAE JAM CECIDERE.] This *revival* of *old* words is one of thoſe *niceties* in compoſition, not to be attempted by any but great maſters. It may be done two ways, 1. by reſtoring ſuch terms, as are grown entirely obſolete; or, 2. by ſelecting out of

 thoſe,

thoſe, which have ſtill a currency, and are not quite laid aſide, ſuch as are moſt forcible and expreſſive. For ſo I underſtand a paſſage in Cicero, who urges this double uſe of old words, as an argument, to his orator, for the diligent ſtudy of the old Latin writers. His words are theſe: *Loquendi elegantia, quamquam expolitur ſcientiâ literarum, tamen augetur legendis oratoribus [veteribus] et poetis: ſunt enim illi veteres, qui ornare nondum poterant ea, quae dicebant, omnes prope præclare locuti — Neque tamen erit utendum verbis iis, quibus jam conſuetudo noſtra non utitur, niſi quando ornandi cauſâ, parcè, quod oſtendam; ſed uſitatis ita poterit uti, lectiſſimis ut utatur is, qui in veteribus erit ſcriptis ſtudioſè et multum volutatus.* [De Orat. l. iii. c. x.] Theſe *choice* words amongſt ſuch as are ſtill in *uſe*, I take to be thoſe which are employed by the old writers in ſome peculiarly ſtrong and energetic ſenſe, yet ſo as with advantage to be copied by the moderns, without appearing barbarous or affected. [See HOR. lib. ii. ep. ii. ℣ 115.] And the reaſon, by the way, of our finding ſuch words in the old writers of every language, may be this. When ideas are new to us, they ſtrike us moſt forcibly; and we endeavour to expreſs, not our *ſenſe* only, but our *ſenſations*, in the terms we uſe to explain them. The paſſion of wonder, which Philoſophy would cure us of, is of ſingular uſe

in

in raiſing the conception, and ſtrengthening the expreſſion of poets. And ſuch is always the condition of old writers, when the arts are reviving, or but beginning to refine. The other uſe of old terms, *i. e.* when become *obſolete*, he ſays, muſt be made *parcè*, more ſparingly. The contrary would, in oratory, be inſufferable affectation. The rule holds in poetry, but with greater latitude; for, as he obſerves in another place, and the reaſon of the thing ſpeaks, *hæc ſunt Poetarum licentiæ liberiora.* [De Or. iii. 38.] But the elegance of the ſtyle, we are told, is increaſed both ways. The reaſon is, according to Quinctilian (who was perfectly of Cicero's mind in this matter. See l. x. c. i.) *Verba à vetuſtate repetita afferunt orationi majeſtatem aliquam non ſine delectatione; nam et auctoritatem antiquitatis habent; et, quia intermiſſa ſunt, gratiam novitati ſimilem parant.* [Lib. i. c. vi. ſub ſin.] But this is not all: The riches of a language are actually increaſed by retaining its old words; and beſides, they have often a greater real weight and dignity, than thoſe of a more faſhionable caſt, which ſucceed to them. This needs no proof to ſuch as are verſed in the earlier writings in *any* language. A very capable judge hath obſerved it in regard of the moſt admired *modern* one: *Nous avons tellement laiſſè ce qui étoit au viel françois, que nous avons laiſſè quant et quant*

*la plus part de ce qu'il avoit de bon.* [Trait. préparatif à l'Apol. pour Herod. l. i. c. xxviii.] Or, if the reader requires a more deciſive teſtimony, let him take it in the words of that curious ſpeaker, Fenelon. *Nôtre langue manque d'un grand nombre de mots et de phraſes. Il me ſemble même qu'on l' a genée et appauvrie depuis environ cent ans en voulant la purifier. Il eſt vrai qu'elle étoit encore un peu informe et trop verbeuſe. Mais le vieux language ſe fait regretter, quand nous le retrouvons dans* MAROT, *dans* AMIOT, *dans le Cardinal d'*OSSAT, *dans les ouvrages les plus enjoues, et dans les plus ſerieux. Il y avoit je ne ſcai quoi de court, de näif, de vif et de paſſioné.* [Reflex. ſur la Rhetorique, Amſt. 1733. p. 4.] From theſe teſtimonies we learn the extreme value, which theſe maſters of compoſition ſet upon their old writers; and as the reaſon of the thing juſtifies their opinions, we may further ſee the important uſe of ſome late attempts to reſtore a better knowledge of our *own*. Which I obſerve with pleaſure, as the growing prevalency of a very different humour, firſt catched, as it ſhould ſeem, from our commerce with the French models, and countenanced by the too ſcrupulous delicacy of ſome good writers amongſt ourſelves, had gone far towards unnerving the nobleſt modern language, and effeminating the public taſte. This was not a little forwarded by, what generally

generally makes its appearance at the ſame time, a kind of feminine curioſity in the choice of words; cautiouſly avoiding and reprobating all ſuch (which were not ſeldom the moſt expreſſive) as had been prophaned by a too vulgar uſe, or had ſuffered the touch of ſome other accidental taint. This ran us into periphraſes and general expreſſion; the peculiar bane of every poliſhed language. Whereas the rhetorician's judgment here again ſhould direct us; *Omnia verba (exceptis paucis parum verecundis) ſunt alicubi optima; nam et humilibus interim et vulgaribus eſt opus, et quæ cultiore in parte videntur ſordida, ubi res poſcit, propriè dicuntur.* Which ſeems borrowed from Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus [περ. συνθεσ. § xii.] οὐδὲν οὔτω ταπεινὸν, ἢ ῥυπαρὸν, ἢ μιαρὸν, ἢ ἄλλην τινὰ δυσχέρειαν ἔχον ἔσεσθαί φημι λόγου μόριον, ᾧ σημαίνεταί τι σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα, ὃ μηδεμίαν ἕξει χῶραν ἐπιτηδείαν ἐν λόγοις. However thoſe two cauſes, "The rejection of old words, as bar-"barous, and of many modern ones, as unpo-"lite," had ſo exhauſted the ſtrength and ſtores of our language, that, as I obſerved, it was high time for ſome maſter-hand to interpoſe and ſend us for ſupplies to our old poets; which, there is the higheſt authority for ſaying, no one ever deſpiſed, but for a reaſon, not very conſiſtent with his credit to avow: *rudem enim eſſe omnino*

*in noſtris poëtis aut inertiſſimæ ſegnitiæ eſt aut faſtidii delicatiſſima.* [Cic. de fin. l. i. c. ii.]

72. —SI VOLET USUS, etc.] *Conſuetudo certiſſima loquendi magiſtra; utendumque planè ſermone, ut nummo, qui publica forma eſt.* [Quinctil. l. i. c. vi.] imitated from Horace. In *Lucian* too, we find it one of the charges brought againſt the Pedant, *Lexiphanes*, that *he clipped the ſtandard* COIN *of the Greek language*—σπȣδὴν ποιȣ́μενος ὡς δή τι μέγα ὂν, εἴτι ξενίζοι κ̀ τὸ καθεϛηκὸς ΝΟ-ΜΙΣΜΑ τῆς φωνῆς παρακόπτοι (c. 20.)

73. RES GESTAE, etc.] The purport of theſe lines [from ℣ 73 to 86] and their connexion with what follows, hath not been fully ſeen. They would expreſs this general propoſition, "That the ſeveral kinds of poetry eſſentially "differ from each other, as may be gathered, not "ſolely from their different ſubjects, but their "different meaſures; which good ſenſe, and an "attention to the peculiar natures of each, in-"ſtructed the great inventors and maſters of "them to employ." The uſe made of this propoſition is to infer, "that therefore the like "attention ſhould be had to the different ſpecies "of the *ſame kind* of poetry [℣ 89, &c.] as in "the caſe of tragedy and comedy (to which the

 "appli-

"application is made) whoſe peculiar differ-
"ences and correſpondencies, as reſulting from
"the natures of each, ſhould, in agreement to
"the univerſal law of *decorum*, be exactly
"known and diligently obſerved by the poet."

*Singula quæque locum teneant ſortita decentem.* ✝ 92.

But, there is a further propriety in this enumeration of the ſeveral kinds of poetry, as addreſſed to the dramatic writer. He is not only to ſtudy, for the purpoſes here explained, the characteriſtic differences of either ſpecies of the drama: He muſt further be knowing in the other *kinds* of poetry, ſo as to be able, as the nature of his work ſhall demand, to adopt the genius of each, in its turn, and to transfer the graces of univerſal poetry into the drama. Thus, to follow the diviſion here laid down, there will ſometimes be occaſion for the pomp and high *coloring* of the EPIC narration; ſometimes for the plaintive ſoftneſs and paſſionate inconnexion of the ELEGY: and the chorus, if characterized in the antient manner, muſt catch the fiery, inraptured ſpirit of the ODE.

*Deſcriptas ſervare vices operumque colores,*
*Cur ego, ſi nequeo ignoroque,* POETA *ſalutor?*

Hence is ſeen the truth of that remark, which there hath been more than once occaſion to make, "That, however general theſe prefatory

" inſtructions may appear, they more eſpecially " reſpect the caſe of the *drama*."

90. INDIGNATUR ITEM, etc.—COENA THYESTAE.] *Il met le ſouper de Thyeſte pour toutes ſortes de tragedies*, ſays M. Dacier; but why this ſubject was ſingled out, as the repreſentative of the reſt, is not explained by him. We may be ſure, it was not taken up at random. The reaſon was, that the Thyeſtes of Ennius was peculiarly chargeable with the fault, here cenſured: as is plain from a curious paſſage in the *Orator*; where Cicero, ſpeaking of the looſe numbers of certain poets, obſerves this, in particular, of the tragedy of Thyeſtes, *Similia ſunt quædam apud noſtros: velut in Thyeſte,*

*Quemnam te eſſe dicam? qui tardâ in ſenectute.*

*et quæ ſequuntur: quæ, niſi cùm tibicen acceſſerit,* ORATIONI SUNT SOLUTÆ SIMILLIMA: which character exactly agrees to *this* of Horace, wherein the language of that play is cenſured, as flat and proſaic, and hardly riſing above the level of ordinary converſation in comedy. This alluſion to a particular play, written by one of their beſt poets, and frequently exhibited on the Roman ſtage, gives great force and ſpirit to the precept, at the ſame time that it exemplifies it in the happieſt manner. It ſeems further probable to

me,

me, that the poet alſo deſigned an indirect compliment to *Varius*, whoſe Thyeſtes, we are told, [*Quinctil.* l. x. c. i.] *was not inferior to any tragedy of the Greeks.* This double intention of theſe lines well ſuited the poet's general aim, which is ſeen through all his critical works, of beating down the exceſſive admiration of the old poets, and of aſſerting the juſt honours of the modern. It may further be obſerved that the critics have not felt the force of the words *exponi* and *narrari* in this precept. They are admirably choſen to expreſs the two faults condemned: the firſt implying a kind of pomp and oſtentation in the language, which is therefore improper for the low ſubjects of comedy: and the latter, as I have hinted, a flat, proſaic expreſſion, not above the caſt of a common *narrative*, and therefore equally unfit for tragedy. Nothing can be more rambling than the comment of Heinſius and Dacier on this laſt word.

94. Iratusque Chremes tumido dilitigat ore: Et tragicus plerumque dolet sermone pedestri.] It may not be amiſs to open a little more particularly the grounds of this criticiſm; which may beſt be done by a commentary on the following lines of the poet:

Format

*Format enim natura priùs nos intùs ad omnem*
*Fortunarum habitum; juvat aut impellit ad iram;*
*Aut ad humum mœrore gravi deducit et angit:*
*Pòſt effert animi motus interprete linguâ:*

To *draw* after the life, in any given conjuncture, the poet muſt recollect (which may eaſily be done by conſulting with his own conſcious experience) that *peculiar diſpoſition* of mind, into which the ſpeaker is, of neceſſity, carried by the circumſtances of his ſituation. And the *ſentiments*, which give the image of this peculiar diſpoſition, are the genuine lineaments of the character intended.

But the *truth* of ſentiment may be hurt or effaced by incongruous language, juſt as the exacteſt lineaments of a portrait are often diſguiſed or loſt under a vicious coloring. To *paint* then as well as draw after the truth, it is requiſite that a further regard be had to the *expreſſion*. Which again is no great difficulty for the artiſt, the ſame common nature holding the torch to him, as before. For in entering into ourſelves we find, that as the mind, in any ſuppoſed ſituation, gives birth to a *certain* ſet of conceptions and ſentiments, correſpondent to its true ſtate, and expreſſive of it: ſo by attending to the *language*, in which thoſe ſentiments ordinarily manifeſt themſelves, we eaſily perceive they take *one* ſtyle or manner of expreſſion preferably

preferably to every other. For *expreſſion*, where falſe art is not employed to diſtort it, gives the juſt image of our *ſentiments*; juſt as *theſe*, when nature is not ſuppreſſed or counteracted, are ever the faithful repreſentatives of the *manners*. They reſult, like the famous *Simulacra* of Epicurus, as by a ſecret deſtination, from their *original forms*; and are, *each*, the perfect copies of *other*. All which will be clearly underſtood by applying theſe general obſervations to the inſtances in view.

The paſſion of ANGER rouſes all the native fire and energy of the ſoul. In this diſorder, and, as it were, inſurrection of the mental powers, our ſentiments are ſtrong and vigorous; nature prompting us to liberal and lofty conceptions of ourſelves, and a ſuperior diſdainful regard of others. This again determines the *genius* of our language, which, to conform to ſuch ſentiments, muſt be bold and animated; breaking out into forcible imagery, and ſwelling in all the pomp of ſounding epithets and violent figures. And this even amidſt the humbler concerns of private and inferior fortunes:

*Iratuſque Chremes* TUMIDO DILITIGAT ORE.

In the paſſion of GRIEF, on the contrary, the reverſe of this takes place. For the mind, oppreſſed and weighed down by its ſorrows, ſinks into

into a weak and timorous deſpondency; inclining us to ſubmit, almoſt without reſiſtance, to the incumbent affliction; or if we ſtruggle at all with it, it is only to eaſe the labouring heart by putting forth ſome fruitleſs ſighs and ineffectual complainings. Thus we find it repreſented by thoſe perfect maſters of ſimple nature, the Greek tragedians. So far are their ſorrowing perſonages from entertaining any vigorous thoughts or manly reſolutions, that they conſtantly languiſh into ſad repinings at their preſent, and trembling apprehenſions of future, miſery.

When theſe ſentiments come to expreſs themſelves in *words*, what can they be but the plaineſt and ſimpleſt which the language of the complainant furniſhes? Such negligence, or more properly ſuch dejection, of ſorrow diſpoſes the ſpeaker to take up with terms as humble as his fortune. His feeble conception is not only unapt or unable to look out for fine words and painted phraſes; but, if chance throw them in his way, he even rejects them as trappings of another condition, and which ſerves only to upbraid his preſent wretchedneſs. The pomp of numbers and pride of *poetic* expreſſion are ſo little his care, that it is well if he even trouble himſelf to obſerve the ordinary exactneſs of *mere*

*proſe* [a]. And this even where the height of rank and importance of affairs conſpire to elevate the mind to more ſtate and dignity.

*Et tragicus plerumque* DOLET SERMONE PEDESTRI.

Thus far the dramatic writer may inform himſelf by entering into his own *conſciouſneſs*, and obſerving the ſure dictates of experience. For what concerns the ſucceſsful application of this rule in *practice*, every thing, as is remarked below, [on ✝ 102.] muſt depend on the conſtitution of his own mind; which yet may be much aſſiſted by the diligent ſtudy of thoſe writers, who excel moſt in this way: in which claſs all agree to give the palm to EURIPIDES.

But here it may not be improper to obviate a common miſtake that ſeems to have ariſen from the too ſtrict interpretation of the poet's Rule. *Tragic characters*, he ſays, *will generally expreſs their ſorrows in a proſaic language*. From this juſt obſervation, haſtily conſidered and compared with the abſurd practice of ſome writers, it hath been concluded, That what we call *pure Poetry*, the eſſence of which conſiſts in bold figures and a lively imagery, hath no place on the Stage.

[a] The reader may ſee a fine ſpeech in the Cyropædia of Xenophon [l. iv.] where not ſo much as this is obſerved.

It

It may not be ſufficient to oppoſe to this notion the *practice* of the beſt poets, antient and modern; for the queſtion recurrs, how far that practice is to be juſtified on the principles of good criticiſm and common ſenſe. To come then, *to the Reaſon of the thing.*

The capital rule in this matter is,

*Reddere Perſonæ—convenientia cuique.*

But to do this, the *Situation* of the perſons and the various *paſſions* reſulting from ſuch ſituation, muſt be well conſidered. Each of theſe has a *character* or turn of thinking peculiar to itſelf. But *all* agree in this property, that they occupy the whole attention of the ſpeaker, and are perpetually offering to his mind a ſet of pictures or images, ſuitable to his ſtate, and expreſſive of it. In theſe the tragic character of every denomination loves to indulge; as we may ſee by looking no farther than on what paſſes before us in common life, where perſons, under the influence of any paſſion, are more eloquent and have a greater quickneſs at alluſion and imagery, than at other times. So that to take from the ſpeaker this privilege of repreſenting ſuch pictures or images is ſo far from conſulting Nature, that it is, in effect, to overlook or reject one of her plaineſt leſſons.

'Tis

'Tis true, if *one* character is buſied in running after the Images which Nature throws in the way only of ſome *other*, or if, in repreſenting ſuch images as are proper to the character, the Imagination is taken up in tracing minute reſemblances and amuſing itſelf with circumſtances that have no relation to the caſe in hand, Then indeed the cenſure of theſe critics is well applied. It may be *fine poetry*, if you will, but very bad *dramatic writing*. But let the imagery be ever ſo great or ſplendid, if it be ſuch only as the governing paſſion loves to conceive and paint, and if it be no further dilated on, and with no greater ſollicitude and curioſity, than the natural working of the paſſion demands, the Drama is ſo far from rejecting ſuch Poetry that it glories in it, as what is moſt eſſential to its true end and deſign.

*Ille per extentum funem mihi poſſe videtur*
*Ire poeta, meum qui pectus inaniter angit,*
*Inritat, mulcet, falſis terroribus implet,*
*Ut magus*——.

An office, which the dramatic poet hath no means of ſuſtaining but by that ſtrong painting and forcible imagery, above deſcribed.

What ſeems to have given a colour to the oppoſite opinion, is the faulty practice which good critics have obſerved in the *French* tragedies, and

in ſome of our own that have been formed upon their model. But the caſe is miſtaken. It is not the *Poetry* of the French or Engliſh drama that deſerves their cenſure, but its prolix and languid *Declamation*, neglecting paſſion for *ſentiment*, or expreſſing *paſſion* in a calm circuit of words and without ſpirit. Even Mr. Addiſon's CATO, which from being immoderately extolled has had the uſual fate of being as immoderately undervalued, is not to be cenſured for its abundance of poetry, but for its application of it in a way that hurts the *paſſion*. General ſentiments, uncharacteriſtic imagery, and both drawn out in a ſpiritleſs, or, which comes to the ſame thing, a too curious expreſſion, are the proper faults of this drama. What the critic of juſt taſte demands in this fine tragedy, is even more poetry, but better applied and touched with more ſpirit.

Still, perhaps, we are but on the ſurface of this matter. The true ground of this miſtaken Criticiſm, is, The Notion, that when the Hero is at the criſis of his fate, he is not at liberty to uſe Poetical, that is, highly figurative expreſſion: but that the proper ſeaſon for theſe things is when he has nothing elſe to do. Whereas the truth is juſt the contrary. The figures, when he is greatly agitated, come of themſelves; and, ſuiting the grandeur and dignity of his ſituation,

are

are perfectly natural. To uſe them in his cool and quiet moments, when he has no great intereſts to proſecute or extricate himſelf from, is directly againſt *Nature*. For, in this ſtate of things, he muſt *ſeek* them, if he will have them. And when he has got them and made his beſt uſe of them, what do they produce? Not ſublimity, but Bombaſt. For it is not the *figures*, but the ſuitableneſs to the *occaſion*, that produces either. Not that I am ignorant that there are vices in the *formation* of figures, as well as in their application. But theſe vices go under various other names. The *pure ſimple Bombaſt* (if I may be indulged ſo bold a catachreſis) ariſes from putting figurative expreſſion to an improper uſe. To give an inſtance of what I mean. TACITUS writes under one continued reſentment at the degeneracy of his times, and ſpeaking of ſome ſumptuary Laws propoſed by the Senate, in 2 *Ann.* c. 33, he ſays they decreed, *Ne Veſtis Serica viros* FOEDARET. This became the dignity of his hiſtoric character and genius. But had his Contemporary, Suetonius, who wrote Chronicles in the ſpirit of our STOW and HOLINGSHEAD, uſed the ſame language, it would have ſet his readers a laughing.

Not but figurative expreſſion, even when *ſuitable* to the character, genius, and general ſub-

in ſome of our own that have been formed upon their model. But the caſe is miſtaken. It is not the *Poetry* of the French or Engliſh drama that deſerves their cenſure, but its prolix and languid *Declamation*, neglecting paſſion for *ſentiment*, or expreſſing *paſſion* in a calm circuit of words and without ſpirit. Even Mr. Addiſon's Cato, which from being immoderately extolled has had the uſual fate of being as immoderately undervalued, is not to be cenſured for its abundance of poetry, but for its application of it in a way that hurts the *paſſion*. General ſentiments, uncharacteriſtic imagery, and both drawn out in a ſpiritleſs, or, which comes to the ſame thing, a too curious expreſſion, are the proper faults of this drama. What the critic of juſt taſte demands in this fine tragedy, is even more poetry, but better applied and touched with more ſpirit.

Still, perhaps, we are but on the ſurface of this matter. The true ground of this miſtaken Criticiſm, is, The Notion, that when the Hero is at the criſis of his fate, he is not at liberty to uſe Poetical, that is, highly figurative expreſſion: but that the proper ſeaſon for theſe things is when he has nothing elſe to do. Whereas the truth is juſt the contrary. The figures, when he is greatly agitated, come of themſelves; and, ſuiting the grandeur and dignity of his ſituation,

are

are perfectly natural. To uſe them in his cool and quiet moments, when he has no great intereſts to proſecute or extricate himſelf from, is directly againſt *Nature*. For, in this ſtate of things, he muſt *ſeek* them, if he will have them. And when he has got them and made his beſt uſe of them, what do they produce? Not ſublimity, but Bombaſt. For it is not the *figures*, but the ſuitableneſs to the *occaſion*, that produces either. Not that I am ignorant that there are vices in the *formation* of figures, as well as in their application. But theſe vices go under various other names. The *pure ſimple Bombaſt* (if I may be indulged ſo bold a catachreſis) ariſes from putting figurative expreſſion to an improper uſe. To give an inſtance of what I mean. TACITUS writes under one continued reſentment at the degeneracy of his times, and ſpeaking of ſome ſumptuary Laws propoſed by the Senate, in 2 *Ann.* c. 33, he ſays they decreed, *Ne Veſtis Serica viros* FOEDARET. This became the dignity of his hiſtoric character and genius. But had his Contemporary, Suetonius, who wrote Chronicles in the ſpirit of our STOW and HOLINGSHEAD, uſed the ſame language, it would have ſet his readers a laughing.

Not but figurative expreſſion, even when *ſuitable* to the character, genius, and general ſub-

jeſt of a writer, may ſtill be *miſplaced.* Thus, had Tacitus, ſpeaking of the honours decreed to Tiberius on a certain occaſion, ſaid with his tranſlator Gordon—*which of theſe he meant to accept or which to reject, the approaching iſſue of his days has* BURIED *in oblivion*—the *figure*, the reader ſees, would have been miſerably out of place; the conceit of the *burial* of his intentions, on the mention of his death, being even ridiculous. But the ridicule, we may be ſure, falls on the tranſlator only, and not on his great original, who expreſſes himſelf on this occaſion, not only with propriety, but with the greateſt ſimplicity—*quos omiſerit receperitve* IN INCERTO *fuit ob propinquum vitæ finem.* Ann. l. vi. c. 45.

I have brought theſe inſtances to ſhew that *figurative expreſſion* is not improper even in a fervent animated hiſtorian, on a *fit ſubject*, and in *due place:* much leſs ſhould the tragic poet, when his characters are to be ſhewn in the conflict of the ſtronger paſſions, be debarred the uſe of it.

The ſhort of the matter is, in one word, this. Civil Society firſt of all *tames us to humanity*, as Cicero expreſſes it; and, in the courſe of its diſcipline, brings us down to one dead level. Its effect is to make us all the ſame pliant, mimic, obſequious things; not unlike, in a word, (if

our pride could overlook the levity of the comparison) what we ſee of trained Apes. But when the violent paſſions ariſe (as in the caſe of theſe Apes when the apples were thrown before them) this artificial diſcipline is all ſhaken off, and we return again to the free and ferocious ſtate of Nature. And what is the expreſſion of that ſtate? It is (as we underſtand by experience) a free and fiery expreſſion, all made up of bold metaphors and daring figures of Speech.

The concluſion is, that Poetry, *pure Poetry*, is the proper language of *Paſſion*, whether we chuſe to conſider it as ennobling, or debaſing the human character.

There is, as I have ſaid, an obvious diſtinction to be made (and to that the poet's rule, as explained in this note, refers) between the ſoft and tender, and the more vigorous paſſions. When the former prevail, the mind is in a weak languid ſtate; and though all alluſion and imagery be not improper here, yet as that fire and energy of the ſoul is wanting, which gives a facility of ranging over our ideas and of ſeizing ſuch as may be turned to any reſemblance of our own condition, it will for that reaſon be leſs *frequent* in this ſtate of the mind than any other. Such imagery, too, will for the ſame reaſon be leſs *ſtriking*, becauſe the ſame languid affections lead to, and make us acquieſce in a ſimpler and

plainer expreſſion. But univerſally in the ſtronger paſſions the *poetical character* prevails, and riſes only in proportion to the force and activity of thoſe paſſions.

To draw the whole then of what has been ſaid on this ſubject into a ſtanding RULE for the obſervance of the dramatic Poet.

"MAN is ſo formed that whether he be in
"joy, or grief; in confidence or deſpair; in
"pleaſure or pain; in proſperity or diſtreſs; in
"ſecurity or danger; or torn and diſtracted by
"all the various modifications of Love, Hate,
"and Fear: The Imagination is inceſſantly
"preſenting to the mind an infinite variety of
"images or pictures, conformable to his Situa-
"tion: And theſe Pictures receive their various
"colouring from the habits, which his birth
"and condition, his education, profeſſion and
"purſuits have induced. The *repreſentation* of
"theſe is the POETRY, and a *juſt* repreſentation,
"in a great meaſure, the ART, of dramatic
"writing."

95. ET TRAGICUS PLERUMQUE DOLET SERMONE PEDESTRI.] Dr. Bentley connects this with the following line:

[*Et tragicus plerumque dolet ſermone pedeſtri*
*Telephus aut Peleus*

4 for

for the ſake, as he ſays, of *preſerving the oppoſition. In comœdiâ iratus Chremes tumido, in tragœdiâ Telephus pauper humili ſermone utitur.* This is ſpecious; but, if the reader attends, he will perceive, that the oppoſition is better preſerved without his connection. For it will ſtand thus: The poet firſt aſſerts of comedy at large, *that it ſometimes raiſes its voice,*

*Interdum tamen et vocem comœdia tollit.*

Next, he confirms this general remark, by appealing to a particular inſtance,

*Iratuſque Chremes tumido dilitigat ore.*

Exactneſs of *oppoſition* will require the ſame method to be obſerved in ſpeaking of *tragedy*; which accordingly is the caſe, if we follow the vulgar reading. For, firſt, it is ſaid of *tragedy*, that, when grief is to be expreſſed, it generally condeſcends to an humbler ſtrain,

*Et tragicus plerumque dolet ſermone pedeſtri.*

And then the general truth, as before, is illuſtrated by a particular inſtance,

*Telephus aut Peleus, cum pauper et exul uterque,*
*Projicit ampullas, &c.*

There is no abſurdity, as the Doctor pretends, in taking *tragicus* for *tragœdiarum ſcriptor.* For the poet, by a common figure, is made to do that, which he repreſents his perſons, as doing.

But this is not the whole, that will deſerve the reader's regard in this place. A ſtrict attention to the ſcope and turn of the paſſage [from ℣ 96 to 114] will lead him to conclude, 1. "That ſome real tragedy of Telephus and "Peleus was intended in ℣ 96, in which the "characters were duly preſerved and ſet forth "in proper language." This the oppoſition to the *Chremes* of Terence abſolutely demands. Let us inquire what this might be. *Euripides*, we know, compoſed tragedies under theſe names; but it is unlikely, the poet ſhould contraſt the inſtance of a *Greek* tragedy to a *Latin* comedy. Nor need it be ſuppoſed. The ſubject was familiar to the Roman poets. For we find a *Telephus* aſcribed to no leſs than three of them, *Ennius*, *Accius*, and *Nævius* [*b*]. One of theſe then, I doubt not, is here intended. But the Roman, in thoſe times, were little more than tranſlations of the Greek plays. Hence it is moſt likely, that the tragedy of *Telephus* (and probably of *Peleus*, though we have not ſo direct authority for this) was, in fact, the tragedy of *Euripides*, tranſlated into Latin, and accommodated to the Roman ſtage, by one of theſe writers. It remains only to enquire, if the *Telephus* itſelf of *Euripides* anſwered to this cha-

[*b*] See *Robert Stephens's Fragm. Vet. Latinorum.*

racter,

racter. Which, I think, it manifeſtly did, from conſidering what his enemy, the buffoon Ariſtophanes, hath ſaid concerning it. Every body knows, that the BATRAXOI of this poet contains a direct ſatyr, and Burleſque upon *Euripides*. Some part of it is particularly levelled againſt his *Telephus*: whence we may certainly learn the objections, that were made to it. Yet the amount of them is only this, "That he had "drawn the character of *Telephus* in too many "circumſtances of diſtreſs and humiliation." His fault was, that he had repreſented him more like a beggar, than an unfortunate prince. Which, in more candid hands, would, I ſuppoſe, amount only to this, "That the poet had "painted his diſtreſs in the moſt natural, and "affecting manner." He had ſtripped him of his royalty, and, together with it of the pomp and oſtentation of the regal language, the very beauty, which Horace applauds and admires in his *Telephus*.

2. Next, I think it as clear from what follows, "That ſome real tragedy of *Telephus*, and "*Peleus*, was alſo glanced at, of a different "ſtamp from the other, and in which the cha-"racters were not ſupported by ſuch propriety "of language." Let the reader judge. Having quoted a *Telephus* and *Peleus*, as examples to the rule concerning the ſtyle of tragedy, and

 afterwards

afterwards enlarged [from ✝ 98 to 103] on the reaſons of their excellence, he returns, with an air of inſult, to the ſame names, apoſtrophizing them in the following manner:

*Telephe, vel Peleu, male ſi mandata loquêris,*
*Aut dormitabo aut ridebo:*

But why this addreſs to *characters*, which he had before alledged, as examples of true dramatical *drawing?* Would any tolerable writer, after having applauded Shakeſpear's King *Lear*, as an inſtance of the kingly character in diſtreſs, naturally painted, apoſtrophize it, with ſuch pointed vehemence, on the contrary ſuppoſition? But let this paſs. The Poet, as though a notorious violation of the critic's rules was to be thoroughly expoſed, goes on, in the ſeven following lines, to ſearch into the bottom of this affair, laying open the ſource and ground of his judgment; and concludes upon the whole,

*Si dicentis erunt fortunis abſona dicta,*
ROMANI TOLLENT EQUITESQUE PATRESQUE CACHINNUM.

Can any thing be plainer, than that this laſt line points at ſome well-known inſtance of a Latin play, which had provoked, upon this account, the contempt and laughter of the beſt judges? It may further be obſerved, that this way of underſtanding the paſſage before us, as it

is

is more conformable to what is here ſhewn to be the general ſcope of the epiſtle, ſo doth it, in its turn, likewiſe countenance, or rather clearly ſhew, the truth and certainty of this method of interpretation.

99. NON SATIS EST PULCHRA, etc.] Dr. Bentley objects to *pulchra*, becauſe this, he ſays, is a general term, including under it every ſpecies of beauty, and therefore that of *dulcis* or the *affecting*. But the great critic did not ſufficiently attend to the connexion, which, as F. Robortellus, in his paraphraſe on the epiſtle, well obſerves, ſtands thus: "It is not enough, that "tragedies have that kind of beauty, which "ariſes from a pomp and ſplendor of diction, "they muſt alſo be pathetic or affecting." *Objiciat ſe mihi hoc loco aliquis et dicat, ſi id fiat* [*i. e.* ſi projiciantur ampullæ] *corrumpi omnem venuſtatem et gravitatem poëmatis tragici, quod nihil niſi grande et elatum recipit. Huic ego ita reſpondendum puto, non ſatis eſſe, ut poëmata venuſta ſint et dignitatem ſuam ſervent: nam dulcedine quoque et ſuavitate quâdam ſunt conſpergenda, ut poſſint auditoris animum inflectere in quamcunque voluerint partem.*

But a very ingenious perſon, who knows how to unite philoſophy with criticiſm; and to all that is elegant in *taſte*, to add what is moſt juſt

and accurate in *ſcience*, hath, in the following note, ſhewn the very foundation of Dr. Bentley's criticiſm to be erroneous.

"There are a multitude of words in every language, which are ſometimes uſed in a *wider*, ſometimes in a *more reſtrained* ſenſe. Of this kind are καλὸν of the Greeks, the *pulchrum* of the Romans, and the words by which they are tranſlated in modern languages. To whatever ſubjects theſe epithets are applied, we always intend to ſignify that they gives us *pleaſure*: and we ſeldom apply them to any ſubjects, but thoſe which pleaſe by means of impreſſions made on the fancy: *including* under this name the reception of images conveyed directly by the ſight itſelf. As Poetry therefore always addreſſes itſelf to the imagination, every ſpecies of *poetical excellence* obtains the name of *Beauty*: and, among the reſt, the power of pleaſing us by affecting the *paſſions*; an effect which intirely depends on the various images preſented to our view. In this ſenſe of the word *beautiful*, it cannot be oppoſed to *pathetic*. *Pulchrum enim quaſcunque carminis virtutes, etiam ipſam* dulcedinem, *in ſe continere meritò videatur.*

But nothing, I think, can be plainer, than that this epithet is often uſed more *determinately*. Viſible forms are not merely occaſions of pleaſure,

ſure, in common with other objects, but they produce a pleaſure of a ſingular kind. And the power they have of producing it, is properly denominated by the name of *Beauty*. Whether Regularity and Variety have been rightly aſſigned, as the circumſtances on which it depends, is a queſtion, which in this place we need not conſider. It cannot at leaſt be denied, that we make a diſtinction among the objects of ſight, when the things themſelves are removed from our view: and that we annex the names of Beauty and Deformity to different objects and different pictures, in conſequence of theſe perceptions. I aſk then, what is meant, when the words are thus applied? Is it only that we are *pleaſed* or *diſpleaſed?* This ſurely cannot be ſaid. For the epithets would then be applied with equal propriety to the objects of different ſenſes; and the fragrance of a flower, for inſtance, would be a ſpecies of beauty; the bitterneſs of wormwood a ſpecies of deformity.—Do we then mean, that we receive pleaſure and pain by means of the *Imagination?* We may indeed mean *this*; but we certainly mean *more* than this. For the ſame names are uſed and applied, in a manner perfectly ſimilar, by numbers of perſons who never once thought of this artificial method of diſtinguiſhing their ideas. There is then ſome kind of perception, common to them and us, which

which has occaſioned this uniformity in our ways of ſpeaking: and whether you will chuſe to conſider the perceptive faculty as reſulting only from habit, or allow it the name of a *Senſe* of Beauty; whether theſe perceptions can, or cannot, be reſolved into ſome *general* principle, imagination of private advantage, or ſympathy with others, are, in the preſent caſe, circumſtances wholly indifferent.

If it be admitted that the epithets, of which we are ſpeaking, were originally uſed in this reſtrained ſenſe, it is eaſy to ſee that they would readily obtain the more *extended* ſignification. For the ſpecies of pleaſure to which they were firſt confined, was found always to ariſe from images impreſſed on the fancy: what then more natural, than to apply the ſame words to every ſpecies of pleaſure reſulting from the imagination, and to every ſpecies of images productive of pleaſure? Thus the *beauty* of a human perſon might originally ſignify ſuch combinations of figure and colour, as produced the *peculiar* perception above-mentioned. *Pulchritudo corporis* (ſays Cicero) *aptâ compoſitione membrorum movet oculos, et eo ipſo delectat, &c.*—But from this ſignification to the other the tranſition was eaſy and obvious. If every beautiful form gave pleaſure, every pleaſing form might come to be called beautiful: not becauſe the ſame perceptions

tions are excited by *all* (the pleaſures being apparently different) but becauſe they are all excited in the ſane manner. And this is confirmed by a diſtinction which every one underſtands between beauties of the *regular* and *irregular* kind. When we would diſtinguiſh theſe from each other, we call the latter *agreeable*, and leave to the former only the name of *beautiful*: that is, we confine the latter term to its proper and original ſenſe.—In much the ſame manner objects *not viſible* may ſometimes obtain the name of beauty, for no other reaſon than becauſe the imagination is agreeably employed about them; and we may ſpeak of a beautiful *character*, as well as a beautiful *perſon*: by no means intending that we have the ſame *feeling* from the one as the other, but that in both caſes we are *pleaſed*, and that in both the *imagination* contributes to the pleaſure.

Now as every *repreſentative art* is capable of affording us pleaſure, and this pleaſure is occaſioned by images impreſſed on the fancy; every pleaſing production of art, will of courſe obtain the name of beautiful. Yet this hinders us not from conſidering beauty as a *diſtinct* excellence in ſuch productions. For we may diſtinguiſh, either in a picture or poem, between the pleaſures we receive directly from the imitation of *viſible forms*, and thoſe which principally depend

on *other* kinds of imitation: And we may conſider viſible forms themſelves either as *occaſions* of pleaſure, in *common* with other objects; or as yielding us that *peculiar* delight which they alone are capable of yielding. If we uſe the word *beautiful* in this *limited* ſenſe, it is very intelligibly oppoſed to *pathetic*. Images of Groves, Fields, Rocks and Water, afford us a pleaſure extremely different from that which we find in the indulgence of our *tender affections*: nor can there be any danger of confounding the agreeable perception received from a maſterly ſtatue of an Apollo or a Venus, with that which ariſes from a repreſentation of the *terrors* men feel under a ſtorm or a plague.

It is no objection to what has been ſaid, that the objects we call *beautiful* may alſo in ſome caſes be occaſions of *paſſion*. The ſight, for inſtance, of a beautiful perſon may give birth to the paſſion of Love: yet to perceive the beauty and to feel the paſſion are two different things. For every beautiful object does not produce love in every obſerver, and the ſame paſſion is ſometimes excited by objects not beautiful; I mean not called beautiful by the perſons themſelves who are affected by them. And the diſtinction between theſe feelings, would receive further confirmation (if indeed there could be any doubt of it) from obſerving that people frequently ſpeak

of

of beauty, and as far as appears intelligibly, in perſons of their *own ſex*; who feel perhaps no *paſſion* but that of *envy*: which will not ſurely be thought the ſame with the perception of *beauty*.

There is then no room for an objection to the text of Horace, as it ſtood before Dr. B.'s emendation: unleſs it ſhould be thought an impropriety to oppoſe two epithets which are *capable* of being underſtood in ſenſes *not oppoſite*. But there is not the leaſt ground for this imagination. For when a word of uncertain ſignification is *oppoſed* to another whoſe ſignification is certain; the oppoſition itſelf *determines* the ſenſe. The word *day* in one of its ſenſes includes the whole ſpace of twenty-four hours: yet it is not ſurely an impropriety to oppoſe *day* to *night*.—In like manner the words *pulchra poëmata*, if we were not directed by the context, might ſignify *good poems* in general: but when the beauty of a poem is *diſtinguiſhed* from other excellences, this diſtinction will lead us to confine our idea to *beautiful imagery*; and, we know it is agreeable to the ſentiments which Horace expreſſes in other places, to declare that this kind of merit is *inſufficient* in *dramatic* writers, from whom we expect a pleaſure of very different kind. Indeed the moſt exquiſite painting, if it is not conſtantly ſubordinate to this higher end, becomes

becomes not only inſufficient, but *impertinent*: ſerving only to divert the attention, and interrupt the courſe of the paſſions.

It may ſeem perhaps that the force of a *Latin* expreſſion cannot be aſcertained from reflections of this ſort, but muſt be gathered from citations of particular paſſages. And this indeed is true with regard to the *peculiarities* of the language. But the queſtion before us is of a different kind. It is a queſtion of *Philoſophy* rather than *Criticiſm*: as depending on thoſe differences of ideas, which are marked by ſimilar forms of expreſſion in *all* languages."

102. SI VIS ME FLERE, DOLENDUM EST PRIMUM IPSI TIBI:] *Tragedy*, as [c] one ſaid, who had a heart to feel its tendereſt emotions, *ſhewed forth the ulcers that are covered with tiſſue.* In order to awaken and call forth in the ſpectator all thoſe ſympathies, which naturally await on the lively exhibition of ſuch a ſcene, the writer muſt have a ſoul *tuned* to the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility, and ſuſceptible of the ſame vibrations from his own created images, which are known to *ſhake* the ſufferer in real life. This is ſo uncommon a pitch of humanity, that 'tis no wonder, ſo few have ſucceeded in this *trying* part of the drama. Euripides, of all the antients,

[c] Sir *Philip Sidney*.

had

had moſt of this ſympathetic tenderneſs in his nature, and accordingly we find him without a rival in this praiſe. Τραγικώτατος τῶν ποιητῶν, ſays Ariſtotle of him [Περὶ ποιητ. κ. ιγ΄.] and to the ſame purpoſe another great critic, *In affecti-bus cum omnibus mirus, tum in iis, qui* MISERA-TIONE *conſtant, facile præcipuus.* [Quinct. l. x. c. i.] They, who apply themſelves to expreſs the *pitiable* ἐλεεινὸν in tragedy, would do well to examine their own hearts by this rule, before they preſume to practiſe upon thoſe of others. See, further, this remark applied by Cicero to the ſubject of oratory, and inforced with his uſual elegance and good ſenſe. [l. ii. c. xlv. *De oratore.*]

103.—TUNC TUA ME INFORTUNIA LAE-DENT.] This is expreſſed with accuracy. Yet the truth is, The more we are *hurt* with repre-ſentations of this ſort, the more we are *pleaſed* with them. Whence ariſes this ſtrange *Plea-ſure?* The queſtion hath been frequently aſked, and various anſwers have been given to it.

But of all the ſolutions of this famous diffi-culty, that which we have juſt now received from Mr. Hume, is by far the moſt curious.

His account in ſhort is, "That the force of "imagination, the energy of expreſſion, the "power of numbers, the charms of imitation, "are all naturally of themſelves delightful to "the mind; that theſe ſentiments of beauty, "being the *predominant* emotions, ſeize the "whole mind, and convert the uneaſy melan-"choly paſſions into themſelves. In a word, "that the ſentiments of *beauty*, excited by a "good tragedy, are the ſuperior prevailing "movements, and transform the ſubordinate "impreſſions ariſing from *grief*, *compaſſion*, *in-"dignation* and *terror*, into one uniform and "ſtrong enjoyment." [*See four Diſſertations by* D. Hume, *Eſq*; *p.* 185, *&c.*]

I have but two objections to this ingenious theory. ONE is, that it ſuppoſes the impreſſion of grief or terror, excited by a well-written tragedy, to be weaker than that which ariſes from our obſervation of the faculties of the writer, the power of numbers, and imitation. Which to me is much the ſame thing as ſaying, That the ſight of a precipice hanging over our heads makes a fainter impreſſion on the eye, than the ſhrubs and wild flowers with which it happens to be covered. The fact is ſo far otherwiſe, that, if the tragedy be well-written, I will

venture to ſay, the faculties of the writer, the charms of poetry, or even the thought of imitation, never come into the ſpectator's head. But he may feel the effect of them, it will be ſaid, for all that. True: But unluckily the whole effect of theſe things is (and that was my OTHER objection) to deepen the impreſſions of grief and terror. They are out of place, and altogether impertinent, if they contribute to any other end. So that to ſay, The impreſſion of grief and terror from a tragic ſtory, ſtrong as it is in itſelf, and made ſtill ſtronger by the art of the poet, is a weaker impreſſion, than the mere pleaſure ariſing from that *art*, is methinks to account for one myſtery by another ten times greater, and to make the poet a verier *magician* than Horace ever intended to repreſent him.

This ingenious ſolution then, being ſo evidently founded on the ſuppoſition of a *falſe fact*, deſerves no further notice. As to the *difficulty* itſelf, the following hints may, perhaps, enable the reader, in ſome meaſure, to account for it.

1. It is not to be doubted but that we love to have our *attention* raiſed, and our *curioſity* gratified. So far the ABBÉ DU BOS' ſyſtem may be admitted.

2. The repreſentation, however diſtreſsful, is ſtill ſeen to be a repreſentation. We find our hearts affected, and even pained, by a good

 tragedy.

tragedy. But we inſtantly recollect that the ſcene is fictitious; and the *recollection* not only abates our uneaſineſs, but diffuſes a ſecret joy upon the mind in the diſcovery we make that the *occaſion* of our uneaſineſs is not real. Juſt as our awaking from a frightful dream, and ſometimes a ſecret conſciouſneſs of the illuſion during the dream itſelf, is attended with pleaſure. That ſo much of M. DE FONTENELLE's notion muſt be admitted, is clear, becauſe children, who take the ſufferings on the ſtage for realities, are ſo afflicted by them that they don't care to repeat the experiment.

But ſtill, all this is by no means a full account of the matter. For,

3. It ſhould be conſidered, that ALL the uneaſy Paſſions, in the very time that we are diſtreſſed by them, nay, though the occaſions be inſtant and real, have a ſecret complacency mixed with them. It ſeems as if providence, in compaſſion to human feeling, had, together with our ſorrows, infuſed a kind of balm into the mind, to temper and qualify, as it were, theſe bitter ingredients. But,

4. Beſides this *general* proviſion, the nature of the *peculiar* paſſions, excited by tragedy, is ſuch as, in a more eminent degree, muſt produce pleaſure. For what are theſe, but indignation at proſperous vice, or the commiſeration of ſuf-

fering

ſering virtue? And the agitation of theſe paſſions is even, in real life, accompanied with a certain delight, which was, no doubt, intended to quicken us in the exerciſe of thoſe ſocial offices. Still further.

5. To the pleaſure *directly* ſpringing from theſe paſſions we may add another which naturally; but imperceptibly almoſt ſteals in upon us from *reflexion*. We are conſcious to our own humanity on theſe tender occaſions. We underſtand and feel that it is *right* for us to be affected by the diſtreſſes of others. Our pain is ſoftened by a ſecret exultation in the rectitude of theſe ſympathies. 'Tis true, this reflex act of the mind is prevented, or ſuſpended at leaſt for a time, when the ſufferings are real, and concern thoſe for whom we are moſt intereſted. But the fictions of the ſtage do not preſs upon us ſo cloſely.

Putting all theſe things together, the concluſion is, That though the impreſſions of the theatre are, in their immediate effect, painful to us, yet they muſt, on the whole, afford an extreme pleaſure, and that in proportion to the degree of the firſt painful impreſſion. For not only our attention is rouzed, but our moral inſtincts are gratified; we reflect with joy that they are ſo, and we reflect too that the ſorrows which call them forth and give this exerciſe to

our humanity, are but fictitious. We are occupied, in a word, by a *great* event; we are melted into tears by a *diſtreſsful* one; the heart is relieved by this burſt of ſorrow; is cheared and animated by the fineſt moral feelings; exults in the conſciouſneſs of its own ſenſibility; and finds, in concluſion, that the whole is but an illuſion.

The ſum is, that we are not ſo properly delighted *by* the Paſſions, as *through* them. They give *occaſion* to the moſt pleaſing movements and gratulations. The art of the poet indeed conſiſts in giving *pain*. But nature and reflexion fly to our relief; and though they do not convert our pain into joy (for that methinks would be little leſs than a new kind of *Tranſubſtantiation*) they have an equivalent effect in producing an exquiſite joy out of our preceding ſorrows.

119. AUT FAMAM SEQUERE, etc.] The connection lies thus: *Language* muſt agree with *character*; *character* with *fame*, or at leaſt with *itſelf*.

123. SIT MEDEA FEROX INVICTAQUE,] Horace took this inſtance from Euripides, where the *unconquered fierceneſs* of this character is preſerved in that due mediocrity, which nature and

juſt

juſt writing demand. The poet, in giving her character, is content to ſay of her,

> Βαρεῖα γὰρ φρὴν ἐδ' ἀνέξεται κακῶς
> Πάσχεσ'

And

> Δεινὴ γάρ. ἐ τοι ῥαδίως γε συμβαλὼν
> Εχθράν τις αὐτῇ, καλλίνικον οἴσεται.

And ſhe herſelf, when opening to the chorus her laſt horrid purpoſe, ſays, fiercely indeed, but not frantically:

> Μηδείς με φαύλην κἀσθενῆ νομιζέτω
> Μηδ' ἡσυχαίαν.

And this is *nature*, which Seneca not perceiving, and yet willing to write up to the critic's rule, hath outraged her character beyond all bounds, and, inſtead of a reſolute, revengeful woman, hath made of her a downright fury. Hence her paſſion is wrought up to a greater height in the very firſt ſcene of the Latin play, than it ever reaches in the Greek poet. The tenor of her language throughout is,

> *invadam deos,*
> *Et cuncta quatiam.*

And hence, in particular, the third and fourth acts expoſe to our view all the horrors of ſorcery (and thoſe too *imaged* to an extravagance) which

Euripides, with ſo much better judgment, thought fit entirely to conceal.

126. SERVETUR AD IMUM QUALIS AB INCEPTO PROCESSERIT, ET SIBI CONSTET.] The rule is, as appears from the reaſon of the thing, and from Ariſtotle, "Let an *uniformity* of character be preſerved, or at leaſt a *conſiſtency*:" i. e. either let the manners be exactly the ſame from the beginning to the end of the play, as thoſe of Medea, for inſtance, and Oreſtes; or, if any change be neceſſary, let it be ſuch as may conſiſt with, and be eaſily reconciled to, the manners formerly attributed; as is ſeen in the caſe of Electra and Iphigenia. We ſhould read then, it is plain,

*ſervetur ad imum*
*Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit,* AUT *ſibi conſtet.*

The miſtake aroſe from imagining, that a character could no other way *conſiſt* with itſelf, but by being *uniform*. A miſtake however, which, as I ſaid, not the reaſon of the thing only, but Ariſtotle's rule might have ſet right. It is expreſſed thus: Τέταρτον δὲ τὸ ὁμαλόν. Κἂν γὰρ ἀνώμαλός τις ᾖ, ὁ τὴν μίμησιν παρέχων κ̀ τοιοῦτον ἦθος ὑποτεθεὶς, ὅμως ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον δεῖ εἶναι. Ποιητ. κ. ιέ. which laſt words, having been not at all underſtood, have kept his interpreters from

ſeeing

ſeeing the true ſenſe and ſcope of the precept. For they have been explained of ſuch characters, as that of *Tigellius* in Horace; which, however proper for ſatyr, or for farcical comedy, are of too fantaſtic and whimſical a nature to be admitted into tragedy; of which Ariſtotle muſt there be chiefly underſtood to ſpeak, and to which Horace, in this place, alone confines himſelf. 'Tis true, indeed, it may be ſaid, that "though a *whimſical* or *fantaſtic* character be "improper for tragedy, an *irreſolute* one is not. "Nothing is finer than a ſtruggle between dif"ferent paſſions; and it is perfectly natural, "that in ſuch a circumſtance, each ſhould pre"vail by turns." But then there is the wideſt difference between the two caſes. *Tigellius*, with all his fantaſtic irreſolution, is as *uniform* a character, as that of *Mitio*. If the expreſſion may be allowed, its very *inconſiſtency* is of the eſſence of its *uniformity*. On the other hand, Electra, torn with ſundry conflicting paſſions, is moſt apparently, and in the propereſt notion of the word, *ununiform*. One of the ſtrongeſt touches in her character is that of a high, heroic ſpirit, ſenſible to her own, and her family's injuries, and determined, at any rate, to revenge them. Yet no ſooner is this revenge perpetrated, than ſhe ſoftens, relents, and pities. Here is a manifeſt *ununiformity*, which can, in no proper ſenſe of the

the expreſſion, lay claim to the critic's ὁμαλὸν, but may be ſo managed, by the poet's ſkill, as to become conſiſtent with the baſis or foundation of her character, that is, to be ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον. And that this, in fact, was the meaning of the critic, is plain from the ſimilar example to his own rule, given in the caſe of Iphigenia: which he ſpecifies (how juſtly, will be conſidered hereafter) as an inſtance of the ἀνωμάλου, *irregular*, or *ununiform*, character, ill-expreſſed, or made *inconſiſtent*. So that the genuine ſenſe of the precept is, "Let the manners be uniform; or, if "ununiform, yet conſiſtently ſo, or uniformly "ununiform:" exactly copied, according to the reading, here given by Horace. Whereas in the other way, it ſtands thus: "Let your "characters be uniform, or unchanged; or, if "you paint an ununiform character (ſuch as "Tigellius) let it be ununiform all the way; "*i. e.* ſuch an irregular character to the end of "the play, as it was at the beginning; which is, "in effect, to ſay, let it be *uniform*:" which apparently deſtroys the latter part of the precept, and makes it an unmeaning tautology with the former.

127. AUT SIBI CONSTET.] The ELECTRA and IPHIGENIA of Euripides have been quoted, in the preceding note, as inſtances of *ununiform* characters,

characters, juſtly ſuſtained, or, what Ariſtotle calls, *uniformly ununiform:* And this, though the general opinion condemns the one, and the great critic himſelf, the other; the reader will expect ſome account to be given of this ſingularity.

1. The objection to Electra, is, that her character is drawn with ſuch heightenings of implacability and reſentment, as make it utterly incredible, ſhe ſhould, immediately on the murder of Clytæmneſtra, fall into the ſame exceſs of grief and regret, as Oreſtes. In confutation of this cenſure I obſerve, 1. That the objection proceeds on a miſtaken preſumption, that the diſtreſs of Electra is equally violent with that of Oreſtes. On the contrary, it is diſcriminated from it by two plain marks. 1. Oreſtes's grief is expreſſed in ſtronger and more emphatic terms—*he accuſes the Gods—he reproaches his ſiſter—de dwells upon every horrid circumſtance, that can inhance the guilt of the murder.* Electra, in the mean time, *confeſſes the ſcene to be mournful—is apprehenſive of bad conſequences—calmly ſubmits to the juſt reproaches of her brother.* 2. He labours as much as poſſible, to clear himſelf from the imputation of the act. She takes it wholly on herſelf, but, regarding it rather as her fate,

the expreſſion, lay claim to the critic's ὁμαλὸν, but may be ſo managed, by the poet's ſkill, as to become conſiſtent with the baſis or foundation of her character, that is, to be ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον. And that this, in fact, was the meaning of the critic, is plain from the ſimilar example to his own rule, given in the caſe of Iphigenia: which he ſpecifies (how juſtly, will be conſidered hereafter) as an inſtance of the ἀνωμάλȣ, *irregular*, or *ununiform*, character, ill-expreſſed, or made *inconſiſtent*. So that the genuine ſenſe of the precept is, "Let the manners be uniform; or, if "ununiform, yet conſiſtently ſo, or uniformly "ununiform:" exactly copied, according to the reading, here given by Horace. Whereas in the other way, it ſtands thus: "Let your "characters be uniform, or unchanged; or, if "you paint an ununiform character (ſuch as "Tigellius) let it be ununiform all the way; "*i. e.* ſuch an irregular character to the end of "the play, as it was at the beginning; which is, "in effect, to ſay, let it be *uniform:*" which apparently deſtroys the latter part of the precept, and makes it an unmeaning tautology with the former.

127. AUT SIBI CONSTET.] The ELECTRA and IPHIGENIA of Euripides have been quoted, in the preceding note, as inſtances of *ununiform* characters,

characters, juſtly ſuſtained, or, what Ariſtotle calls, *uniformly ununiform*: And this, though the general opinion condemns the one, and the great critic himſelf, the other; the reader will expect ſome account to be given of this ſingularity.

1. The objection to Electra, is, that her character is drawn with ſuch heightenings of implacability and reſentment, as make it utterly incredible, ſhe ſhould, immediately on the murder of Clytæmneſtra, fall into the ſame exceſs of grief and regret, as Oreſtes. In confutation of this cenſure I obſerve, 1. That the objection proceeds on a miſtaken preſumption, that the diſtreſs of Electra is equally violent with that of Oreſtes. On the contrary, it is diſcriminated from it by two plain marks. 1. Oreſtes's grief is expreſſed in ſtronger and more emphatic terms—*he accuſes the Gods*—*he reproaches his ſiſter*—*de dwells upon every horrid circumſtance, that can inhance the guilt of the murder.* Electra, in the mean time, *confeſſes the ſcene to be mournful*—*is apprehenſive of bad conſequences*—*calmly ſubmits to the juſt reproaches of her brother.* 2. He labours as much as poſſible, to clear himſelf from the imputation of the act. She takes it wholly on herſelf, but, regarding it rather as her fate,

fate, than her fault, comforts herſelf in reflecting on the juſtice of it.

πατρὸς δ' ἔτισας φόνον δικαίως. Act v.

This laſt circumſtance puts the wideſt difference between the two caſes. The one ſhews a perfect diſtraction of mind, which cannot even bear the conſciouſneſs of its crimes: the other, a firm and ſteddy ſpirit, ſenſible indeed to its miſery, but not oppreſſed or aſtoniſhed by it.

2. But this meaſure of grief, ſo delicately marked, and, with ſuch truth of character, aſcribed to Electra, ought not, it is further inſiſted, to have ſhewn itſelf, immediately, on the murder of Clytæmneſtra. But why not? There is nothing in the *character of Electra*, *the maxims of thoſe times*, or *in the diſpoſition of the drama itſelf*, to render this change improper or incredible. On the contrary, there is much under each of theſe heads, to lead one to expect it.

1. *Electra's character* is indeed that of a fierce, and determined, but withall of a generous and virtuous woman. Her motives to revenge were, principally, a ſtrong ſenſe of juſtice, and ſuperior affection for a father; not a rooted, unnatural averſion to a mother. She acted, as appears, not from the perturbation of a tumultuous revenge (in that caſe indeed the objection had been

been of weight) but from a fixed abhorrence of wrong, and a virtuous ſenſe of duty. And what ſhould hinder a perſon of this character from being inſtantly touched with the diſtreſs of ſuch a ſpectacle?

2. *The maxims of thoſe times alſo favour this conduct.* For, 1. The notions of ſtrict remunerative juſtice were then carried very high. This appears from the *Lex talionis*, which, we know, was in great credit in elder Greece; from whence it was afterwards transferred into the Law of the XII Tables. Hence *blood for blood* [αἷμα δ᾽ αἵματος δανεισμὸς, —as the meſſenger, in his account of the death of Ægyſthus, expreſſes it, Act iv.] was the command and rule of juſtice. This the Chorus, as well as the parricides, frequently inſiſt upon, as the ground and juſtification of the murder. 2. This ſevere vengeance on enormous offenders was believed, not only conſonant to the rules of *human*, but to be the object, and to make the eſpecial care of the *divine*, juſtice. And thus the ancients conceived of this very caſe. *Juvenal*, ſpeaking of Oreſtes,

*Quippe ille* DEIS AUCTORIBUS *ultor*
*Patris erat cæſi media inter pocula.* Sat. viii.

And to this opinion agrees that tradition, or rather fiction, of the poets, who, though they repreſent

fate, than her fault, comforts herſelf in reflecting on the juſtice of it.

πατρὸς δ' ἔτισας φόνον δικαίως. Act v.

This laſt circumſtance puts the wideſt difference between the two caſes. The one ſhews a perfect diſtraction of mind, which cannot even bear the conſciouſneſs of its crimes: the other, a firm and ſteddy ſpirit, ſenſible indeed to its miſery, but not oppreſſed or aſtoniſhed by it.

2. But this meaſure of grief, ſo delicately marked, and, with ſuch truth of character, aſcribed to Electra, ought not, it is further inſiſted, to have ſhewn itſelf, immediately, on the murder of Clytæmneſtra. But why not? There is nothing in the *character of Electra*, *the maxims of thoſe times*, or *in the diſpoſition of the drama itſelf*, to render this change improper or incredible. On the contrary, there is much under each of theſe heads, to lead one to expect it.

1. *Electra's character* is indeed that of a fierce, and determined, but withall of a generous and virtuous woman. Her motives to revenge were, principally, a ſtrong ſenſe of juſtice, and ſuperior affection for a father; not a rooted, unnatural averſion to a mother. She acted, as appears, not from the perturbation of a tumultuous revenge (in that caſe indeed the objection had

been

been of weight) but from a fixed abhorrence of wrong, and a virtuous ſenſe of duty. And what ſhould hinder a perſon of this character from being inſtantly touched with the diſtreſs of ſuch a ſpectacle?

2. *The maxims of thoſe times alſo favour this conduct.* For, 1. The notions of ſtrict remunerative juſtice were then carried very high. This appears from the *Lex talionis*, which, we know, was in great credit in elder Greece; from whence it was afterwards transferred into the Law of the XII Tables. Hence *blood for blood* [αἷμα δ' αἵματος δανεισμὸς, — as the meſſenger, in his account of the death of Ægyſthus, expreſſes it, Act iv.] was the command and rule of juſtice. This the Chorus, as well as the parricides, frequently inſiſt upon, as the ground and juſtification of the murder. 2. This ſevere vengeance on enormous offenders was believed, not only conſonant to the rules of *human*, but to be the object, and to make the eſpecial care of the *divine*, juſtice. And thus the ancients conceived of this very caſe. *Juvenal*, ſpeaking of Oreſtes,

> *Quippe ille* DEIS AUCTORIBUS *ultor*
> *Patris erat cæſi media inter pocula.* Sat. viii.

And to this opinion agrees that tradition, or rather fiction, of the poets, who, though they

repreſent

fate, than her fault, comforts herſelf in reflecting on the juſtice of it.

πατρὸς δ' ἔτισας φόνον δικαίως. Act v.

This laſt circumſtance puts the wideſt difference between the two caſes. The one ſhews a perfect diſtraction of mind, which cannot even bear the conſciouſneſs of its crimes: the other, a firm and ſteddy ſpirit, ſenſible indeed to its miſery, but not oppreſſed or aſtoniſhed by it.

2. But this meaſure of grief, ſo delicately marked, and, with ſuch truth of character, aſcribed to Electra, ought not, it is further inſiſted, to have ſhewn itſelf, immediately, on the murder of Clytæmneſtra. But why not? There is nothing in the *character of Electra*, *the maxims of thoſe times*, or *in the diſpoſition of the drama itſelf*, to render this change improper or incredible. On the contrary, there is much under each of theſe heads, to lead one to expect it.

1. *Electra's character* is indeed that of a fierce, and determined, but withall of a generous and virtuous woman. Her motives to revenge were, principally, a ſtrong ſenſe of juſtice, and ſuperior affection for a father; not a rooted, unnatural averſion to a mother. She acted, as appears, not from the perturbation of a tumultuous revenge (in that caſe indeed the objection had been

been of weight) but from a fixed abhorrence of wrong, and a virtuous ſenſe of duty. And what ſhould hinder a perſon of this character from being inſtantly touched with the diſtreſs of ſuch a ſpectacle?

2. *The maxims of thoſe times alſo favour this conduct.* For, 1. The notions of ſtrict remunerative juſtice were then carried very high. This appears from the *Lex talionis*, which, we know, was in great credit in elder Greece; from whence it was afterwards transferred into the Law of the XII Tables. Hence *blood for blood* [αἷμα δ' αἵματος δανεισμὸς, — as the meſſenger, in his account of the death of Ægyſthus, expreſſes it, Act iv.] was the command and rule of juſtice. This the Chorus, as well as the parricides, frequently inſiſt upon, as the ground and juſtification of the murder. 2. This ſevere vengeance on enormous offenders was believed, not only conſonant to the rules of *human*, but to be the object, and to make the eſpecial care of the *divine*, juſtice. And thus the ancients conceived of this very caſe. *Juvenal*, ſpeaking of Oreſtes,

*Quippe ille* DEIS AUCTORIBUS *ultor*
*Patris erat cæſi media inter pocula.* Sat. viii.

And to this opinion agrees that tradition, or rather fiction, of the poets, who, though they repreſent

5. Laſtly, it ſhould be remembered, how heinous a crime adultery was eſteemed in the old world; when, as well as murder, we find it puniſhed with death. The law of the XII Tables expreſly ſays, ADVLTERII CONVICTAM VIR ET COGNATI, VTI VELINT, NECANTO. Now, all theſe conſiderations put together, Electra might aſſiſt at the aſſaſſination of her mother, conſiſtently with the ſtrongeſt feelings of piety and affection. That theſe then ſhould inſtantly break forth, ſo ſoon as the debt to juſtice, to duty, and to fate was paid, is nothing wonderful. And this, by the way, vindicates the Chorus from the inconſiſtency, by ſome charged upon it, in condemning the act, when done, which before they had laboured to juſtify. The common anſwer, "That the Chorus follows the character of the people," is inſufficient. For (beſides that the Chorus always ſuſtains a moral character) whence that inconſiſtency in the people themſelves? The reaſon was, the popular creed of thoſe times. It had been an omiſſion of duty to have declined, it was criminal to execute, the murder.

3. The diſpoſition of the drama (whether the moſt judicious, or not, is not the queſtion) was calculated to introduce this change with the greateſt probability. Electra's principal reſentment was to Ægyſthus. From him chiefly pro-

ceeded

ceeded her ill treatment, and from him was apprehended the main danger of the enterprize. Now, Ægyſthus being taken off in the beginning of the preceding act, there was time to indulge all the movements and gratulations of revenge, which the objection ſuppoſes ſhould precede, and for a while ſuſpend the horrors of remorſe, before they come to the murder of Clytæmneſtra. This is rendered the more likely by the long parley, that goes before it; which rather tends to ſoften, than exaſperate, her reſentments, and ſeems artfully contrived to prepare the change, that follows.

On the whole, Electra's concern, as managed by the poet, is agreeable to the tenor of her character, and the circumſtances of her ſituation. To have drawn her otherwiſe, had been perhaps in the taſte of modern tragedy, but had certainly been beſide the line of nature, and practice of the antients.

11. The caſe of Iphigenia, though a greater authority ſtand in the way, is ſtill eaſier. Ariſtotle's words are, τοῦ δὲ ἀνωμάλου [παράδειγμα] ἡ ἐν Αὐλίδι Ἰφιγένεια. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔοικεν ἡ ἱκετεύουσα τῇ ὑστέρᾳ, i. e. "Iphigenia is an inſtance "of the inconſiſtent character: for there "is no probable conformity betwixt her "fears and ſupplications at firſt, and her firm-"neſs and reſolution afterwards." But how

 doth

doth this appear, independently of the name of this great critic? Iphigenia is drawn indeed, at firſt, fearful and ſuppliant: and ſurely with the greateſt obſervance of nature. The account of her deſtination to the altar was ſudden, and without the leaſt preparation; and, as Lucretius well obſerves, in commenting her caſe, NUBENDI TEMPORE IN IPSO; when her thoughts were all employed, and, according to the ſimplicity of thoſe times, confeſſed to be ſo, on her promiſed nuptials. The cauſe of ſuch deſtination too, as appeared at firſt, was the private family intereſt of Menelaus. All this juſtifies, or rather demands, the ſtrongeſt expreſſion of female fear and weakneſs. "But ſhe afterwards recants "and voluntarily devotes herſelf to the altar." And this, with the ſame ſtrict attention to probability. She had now informed herſelf of the importance of the caſe. Her devotement was the demand of Apollo, and the joint petition of all Greece. The glory of her country, the dignity and intereſt of her family, the life of the generous Achilles, and her own future fame, were, all, nearly concerned in it. All this conſidered, together with the high, heroic ſentiments of thoſe times, and the ſuperior merit, as was believed, of voluntary devotement, Iphigenia's character muſt have been very unfit for the diſtreſs of a whole tragedy to turn upon, if ſhe

ſhe had not, in the end, diſcovered the readieſt ſubmiſſion to her appointment. But, to ſhew with what wonderful propriety the poet knew to ſuſtain his characters, we find her, after all, and notwithſtanding the heroiſm of the change, in a ſtrong and paſſionate apoſtrophe to her native Mycenæ, confeſſing ſome involuntary apprehenſions and regrets, the remains of that inſtinctive abhorrence of death, which had before ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſed her.

Ἔθρεψας Ἑλλάδι μέγα φάος—
θανοῦσα δ' οὐκ ἀναίνομαι.

Once the bright ſtar of Greece—
But I ſubmit to die.

This, I take to be not only a full vindication of the conſiſtency of Iphigenia's character, but as delicate a ſtroke of nature, as is, perhaps, to be found in any writer.

After the writing of this note, I was pleaſed to find, that ſo ſenſible a critic, as P. Brumoi, had been before me in theſe ſentiments concerning the character of Iphigenia. The reaſons he employs, are nearly the ſame. Only he confirms them all by ſhewing, that the Iphigenia of Racine, which is modelled, not according to the practice of Euripides, but the Comment of Ariſtotle, is, in all reſpects, ſo much the worſe for it. In juſtice to this ingenious writer, it

doth this appear, independently of the name of this great critic? Iphigenia is drawn indeed, at firſt, fearful and ſuppliant: and ſurely with the greateſt obſervance of nature. The account of her deſtination to the altar was ſudden, and without the leaſt preparation; and, as Lucretius well obſerves, in commenting her caſe, NUBENDI TEMPORE IN IPSO; when her thoughts were all employed, and, according to the ſimplicity of thoſe times, confeſſed to be ſo, on her promiſed nuptials. The cauſe of ſuch deſtination too, as appeared at firſt, was the private family intereſt of Menelaus. All this juſtifies, or rather demands, the ſtrongeſt expreſſion of female fear and weakneſs. "But ſhe afterwards recants "and voluntarily devotes herſelf to the altar." And this, with the ſame ſtrict attention to probability. She had now informed herſelf of the importance of the caſe. Her devotement was the demand of Apollo, and the joint petition of all Greece. The glory of her country, the dignity and intereſt of her family, the life of the generous Achilles, and her own future fame, were, all, nearly concerned in it. All this conſidered, together with the high, heroic ſentiments of thoſe times, and the ſuperior merit, as was believed, of voluntary devotement, Iphigenia's character muſt have been very unfit for the diſtreſs of a whole tragedy to turn upon, if ſhe

ſhe had not, in the end, diſcovered the readieſt ſubmiſſion to her appointment. But, to ſhew with what wonderful propriety the poet knew to ſuſtain his characters, we find her, after all, and notwithſtanding the heroiſm of the change, in a ſtrong and paſſionate apoſtrophe to her native Mycenæ, confeſſing ſome involuntary apprehenſions and regrets, the remains of that inſtinctive abhorrence of death, which had before ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſed her.

*Ἔθρεψας Ἑλλάδι μέγα φάος —*
*θανȣ̃σα δ᾽ ȣ̓κ ἀναίνομαι.*

Once the bright ſtar of Greece —
But I ſubmit to die.

This, I take to be not only a full vindication of the conſiſtency of Iphigenia's character, but as delicate a ſtroke of nature, as is, perhaps, to be found in any writer.

After the writing of this note, I was pleaſed to find, that ſo ſenſible a critic, as P. Brumoi, had been before me in theſe ſentiments concerning the character of Iphigenia. The reaſons he employs, are nearly the ſame. Only he confirms them all by ſhewing, that the Iphigenia of Racine, which is modelled, not according to the practice of Euripides, but the Comment of Ariſtotle, is, in all reſpects, ſo much the worſe for it. In juſtice to this ingenious writer, it

ſhould be owned, that he is almoſt the only one of his nation, who hath perfectly ſeen through the foppery, or, as ſome affect to eſteem it, the refinement of French manners. This hath enabled him to give us, in his *Théatre des Grecs*, a maſterly and very uſeful view of the Greek ſtage; ſet forth in all its genuine ſimplicity, and defended on the ſure principles of nature and common ſenſe.

128. DIFFICILE EST PROPRIE COMMUNIA DICERE:] Lambin's Comment is *Communia hoc loco appellat Horatius argumenta fabularum à nullo adhuc tractata: et ita, quæ cuivis expoſita ſunt et in medio quodammodo poſita, quaſi vacua et à nemine occupata.* And that this is the true meaning of *communia* is evidently fixed by the words *ignota indictaque*, which are explanatory of it: ſo that the ſenſe, given it in the commentary, is unqueſtionably the right one. Yet, notwithſtanding the clearneſs of the caſe, a late critic hath this ſtrange paſſage: *Difficile quidem eſſe proprie communia dicere, hoc eſt, materiam vulgarem, notam, et è medio petitam ita immutare atque exornare, ut nova et ſcriptori propria videatur, ultro concedimus; et maximi proculdubio ponderis iſta eſt obſervatio. Sed omnibus utrinque collatis, et tum difficilis, tum venuſti, tam judicii quam ingenii ratione habita, major videtur eſſe gloria fabulam formare penitus*

*novam,*

*novam, quam veterem, utcunque mutatam, de novo exhibere.* [Poet. Præl. v. ii. p. 164.] Where having firſt, put a wrong conſtruction on the word *communia*, he imploys it to introduce an impertinent criticiſm. For where does the poet prefer the glory of refitting *old* ſubjects, to that of inventing new ones? The contrary is implied in what he urges about the ſuperior difficulty of the latter; from which he diſſuades his countrymen, only in reſpect of their abilities and inexperience in theſe matters; and in order to cultivate in them, which is the main view of the Epiſtle, a ſpirit of correctneſs, by ſending them to the old ſubjects, treated by the Greek writers.

131. Publica materies privati Juris erit, etc.] *Publica materies* is juſt the reverſe of what the poet had before ſtiled *communia*; the latter meaning ſuch ſubjects or characters, as, though by their nature left in common to all, had yet, in fact, not been *occupied* by any writer—the former thoſe, which had already been made *public* by *occupation*. In order to acquire a property in ſubjects of this ſort, the poet directs us to obſerve the three following cautions: 1. *Not to follow the trite, obvious round of the original work*, i. e. not ſervilely and ſcrupulouſly to adhere to its plan or method. 2. *Not*

*to be tranſlators, inſtead of imitators*, i. e. if it ſhall be thought fit to imitate more expreſly any part of the original, to do it with freedom and ſpirit, and without a ſlaviſh attachment to the mode of expreſſion. 3. *Not to adopt any particular incident, that may occur in the propoſed model, which either decency or the nature of the work would reject.* M. Daçier illuſtrates theſe rules, which have been conceived to contain no ſmall difficulty, from the Iliad; to which the poet himſelf refers, and probably not without an eye to particular inſtances of the errors, here condemned, in the Latin tragedies. For want of theſe, it may be of uſe to fetch an illuſtration from ſome examples in our own. And we need not look far for them. Almoſt every modern play affords an inſtance of one or other of theſe faults. The ſingle one of Catiline by B. Johnſon is, itſelf, a ſpecimen of them all. This tragedy, which hath otherwiſe great merit, and on which its author appears to have placed no ſmall value, is, in fact, the Catilinarian war of Salluſt, put into poetical dialogue, and ſo offends againſt the *firſt* rule of the poet, *in following too ſervilely the plain beaten round of the Chronicle.* 2. Next, the ſpeeches of Cicero and Catiline, of Cato and Cæſar are, all of them, direct and literal tranſlations of the hiſtorian and orator, in violation of the *ſecond* rule, which forbids *a too*

*cloſe*

*cloſe attachment to the mode, or form of expreſſion.*

3. There are ſeveral tranſgreſſions of that rule, which injoins *a ſtrict regard to the nature and genius of the work.* One is obvious and ſtriking. In the hiſtory, which had, for its ſubject, the whole Catilinarian war, the fates of the conſpirators were diſtinctly to be recorded, and the preceding debates, concerning the manner of their puniſhment, afforded an occaſion, too inviting to be overlooked by an hiſtorian, and above all a republican hiſtorian, of embelliſhing his narration by ſet harangues. Hence the long ſpeeches of Cæſar and Cato in the ſenate have great propriety, and are juſtly eſteemed among the leading beauties of that work. But the caſe was totally different in the drama; which, taking for its ſubject the ſingle fate of Catiline, had no concern with the other conſpirators, whoſe fates at moſt ſhould only have been hinted at, not debated with all the circumſtance and pomp of rhetoric on the ſtage. Nothing can be more flat and diſguſting, than this calm, impertinent pleading; eſpecially in the very heat and winding up of the plot. But the poet was miſled by the beauty it appeared to have in the original compoſition, without attending to the peculiar laws of the drama, and the *indecorum* it muſt needs have in ſo very different a work.

 136. NEC

136. NEC SIC INCIPIES, UT SCIPTOR CYCLICUS OLIM:] All this [to ⅌ 153] is a continuation of the poet's advice, given above,

*Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus*
*Quam ſi proferres ignota indictaque primus.*

For, having firſt ſhewn in what reſpects a cloſe obſervance of the epic form would be vicious in tragedy, he now preſcribes how far it may be uſefully admitted. And this is, 1. [from 136 to 146] in the ſimplicity and modeſty of the exordium; and, 2. [to ⅌ 153] in the artificial method and contexture of the piece. 1. The reaſon of the former rule is founded on the impropriety of raiſing a greater expectation, at ſetting out, than can, afterwards be anſwered by the ſequel of the poem. But, becauſe the epic writers themſelves, from whom this conduct was to be drawn, had ſometimes tranſgreſſed this rule, and as the example of ſuch an error would be likely to infect, and, in all probability, actually did infect, the tragic poets of that time, he takes occaſion, 1. to criticize an abſurd inſtance of it; and, 2. to oppoſe to it the wiſer practice of Homer.

2. The like conduct he obſerves under the ſecond article. For, being to recommend to the tragic writer ſuch an artificial diſpoſition of his ſubject, as *haſtens rapidly to the event*, and rejects,

as

as impertinent, all particulars in the round of the ſtory, which would unneceſſarily obſtruct his courſe to it—a plan eſſentially neceſſary to the legitimate epic—he firſt glances at the injudicious violation of this method in a certain poem on *the return of* Diomed, and then illuſtrates and lays open the ſuperior art and beauty of the Iliad. And all this, as appears, for the ſole purpoſe of explaining and inforcing the precept about forming the plots of tragedies from epic poems. Whence we ſee, how properly the examples of the errors, here condemned, are taken, not from the *drama*, as the leſs attentive reader might expect, but ſolely from the epos; for, *this* being made the object of imitation to the dramatic poet, as the tenor of the place ſhews, it became neceſſary to guard againſt the influence of bad models. Which I obſerve for the ſake of thoſe, who, from not apprehending the connection of this and ſuch like paſſages in the epiſtle, haſtily conclude it to be a confuſed medley of precepts concerning the art of poetry, in general; and not a regular well-conducted piece, uniformly tending to lay open the ſtate, and to remedy the defects, of the Roman ſtage.

148. SEMPER AD EVENTUM FESTINAT; etc.] The diſpoſition, here recommended to the poet,

might

might be ſhewn *univerſally* right from the cleareſt principles. But the propriety and beauty of it will, perhaps, be beſt apprehended by ſuch, as are unuſed to the more abſtract criticiſm, from attending to a *particular* inſtance. Let us conceive an objector then to put the following query: " Suppoſing the author of the Æneis to " have related, in the natural order, the de- " ſtruction of Troy, would not the ſubject have " been, to all intents and purpoſes, as much *one*, " as it is, under its preſent form; in which that " event is told, in the ſecond book, by way of " epiſode?" I anſwer by no means. The reaſon is taken from *the nature of the work*, and from *the ſtate and expectations of the reader*.

1. The *nature of an epic or narrative poem* is this, that it lays the author under an obligation of ſhewing any event, which he formally undertakes in his own perſon, at full length, and with all its material circumſtances. Every figure muſt be drawn in full proportion, and exhibited in ſtrong, glowing colours. Now had the ſubject of the ſecond book of the Æneis been related, in this extent, it muſt not only have taken up one, but many books. By this faithful and animated *drawing*, and the time it would neceſſarily have to *play* upon the imagination, the event had grown into ſuch importance,

that

that the remainder could only have paſſed for a kind of Appendix to it.

2. The ſame concluſion is drawn from conſidering *the ſtate of the reader*. For, hurried away by an inſtinctive impatience, he purſues the propoſed event with eagerneſs and rapidity. So circumſtantial a detail, as was ſuppoſed, of an intermediate action not neceſſarily connected with it, breaks the courſe of his expectations, and throws forward the point of view to an immoderate diſtance. In the mean time the action, thus interpoſed and preſented to his thoughts, acquires by degrees, and at length ingroſſes his whole attention. It becomes the important theme of the piece; or, at leaſt, what follows ſets out with the diſadvantage of appearing to him, as a new and diſtinct ſubject.

But now being related by way of epiſode, that is, as a ſuccinct, ſummary narration, not made by the poet himſelf, but coming from the mouth of a perſon, neceſſarily ingaged in the progreſs of the action, it ſerves for a ſhort time to interrupt, and, by that interruption to ſharpen, the eager expectation of the reader. It holds the attention, for a while, from the main point of view; yet not long enough to deſtroy that impatient curioſity, which looks forward to it. And thus it contributes to the ſame end, as a piece of miniature, properly introduced into a

large picture. It amuſes the eye with ſomething relative to the painter's deſign, yet not ſo, as to with-hold its principal obſervation from falling on the greater ſubject. The parallel will not hold very exactly, becauſe the painter is, of neceſſity, confined to the ſame *inſtant* of time; but it may ſerve for an illuſtration of my meaning. Suppoſe the painter to take, for his ſubject, that part of Æneas's ſtory, where, with his *penates*, his *father*, and his *ſon*, he is preparing to ſet ſail for Italy. To draw *Troy in flames*, as a conſtituent part of this picture, would be manifeſtly abſurd. It would be painting two ſubjects, inſtead of one. And perhaps *Troja incenſa* might ſeize the attention before

*Aſcanium Anchiſenque patrem Teucroſque penates.*

But a diſtant perſpective of *burning Troy* might be thrown into a corner of the piece, that is, epiſodically, with good advantage; where, inſtead of diſtracting the attention, and breaking the unity of the ſubject, it would concenter, as it were, with the great deſign, and have an effect in augmenting the diſtreſs of it.

143. TU, QUID EGO ET POPULUS, etc.] The connection is this. "But though the "ſtrict obſervance of theſe rules will enable the "poet to conduct his *plot* to the beſt advantage, "yet this is not *all* which is required to a *perfect*

" tragedy.

"tragedy. If he would ſeize the attention, and "ſecure the applauſe, of the audience, ſome- "thing further muſt be attempted. He muſt "(to return to the point, from which I digreſſed, "ỳ 127) be particularly ſtudious to expreſs the "*manners*. Beſides the peculiarities of *office*, "*temper*, *condition*, *country*, &c. before con- "ſidered, all which require to be drawn with "the utmoſt fidelity, a ſingular attention muſt "be had to the characteriſtic differences of *age*."

*Ætatis cujuſque notandi ſunt tibi mores.*

The reaſon of this conduct is given in the commentary. It further ſerves to adorn this part of the epiſtle [which is wholly preceptive from ỳ 89 to 202] with thoſe beautiful pourtraitures of human life, in its ſeveral ſucceſſive ſtages, which nature and Ariſtotle had inſtructed him ſo well to paint.

157. MOBILIBUSQUE DECOR NATURIS DANDUS ET ANNIS.] MOBILIBUS] *non levibus aut inconſtantibus, ſed quæ variatis ætatibus immutantur.* Lambin. NATURIS] By this word is not meant, ſimply, that inſtinctive *natural* biaſs, implanted in every man, to this or that character, but, in general, *nature*, as it appears diverſified in the different periods of life. The ſenſe will be: A certain *decorum* or propriety muſt be obſerved

ſerved in painting the natures or diſpoſitions of men varying with their years.

There is then no occaſion for changing the text, with Dr. Bentley, into

*Mobilibuſque decor, maturis dandus et annis.*

179. AUT AGITUR RES IN SCENIS, AUT ACTA REFERTUR: etc.] The connection is this. The *miſapplication*, juſt now mentioned, deſtroys the *credibility*. This puts the poet in mind of another miſconduct, which hath the ſame effect, viz. *intus digna geri promere in ſcenam.* But, before he makes this obſervation, it was proper to premiſe a *conceſſion* to prevent miſtakes, viz.

*Segnius irritant animos*, etc.

182. NON TAMEN INTUS DIGNA GERI PROMES IN SCENAM:] I know not a more ſtriking example of the tranſgreſſion of this rule, than in Seneca's Hippolytus; where Theſeus is made to weep over the mangled members of his ſon, which he attempts to put together on the ſtage. This, which has ſo horrid an appearance in the *action*, might have been ſo contrived, as to have an infinite beauty in the *narration*; as may be ſeen from a ſimilar inſtance in Xenophon's Cyropædia, where Panthea is repreſented putting together the torn limbs of Abradates.

185. NE

185. NE PUEROS CORAM POPULO, etc.] Seneca, whom we before [ℽ 123] ſaw ſo ſollicitous to keep up to one rule of Horace, here makes no ſcruple to tranſgreſs another. For, in violation of the very letter of this precept, and of all the laws of decency and common ſenſe, he repreſents Medea butchering her children in the face of the people; and, as if this too faintly painted the fury of her character, he further aggravates the cruelty of the execution, with all the horrors of a lingering act. This, ſeemingly inconſiſtent, conduct of the poet was, in truth, owing to one and the ſame cauſe, namely, "The "endeavour to ſuſtain Medea's character." For, wanting true taſte to diſcern the exact boundaries, which nature had preſcribed to the human character, or true genius to ſupport him in a due preſervation of it, he, as all bad writers uſe, for fear of doing too little, unfortunately does too much; and ſo, as Shakeſpear well expreſſes it, *o'erſteps the modeſty of nature*, inflating her *ſentiments* with extravagant paſſion, and blackening her *acts* with circumſtances of unnatural horror. Though ſome of theſe faults I ſuſpect he only copied. For, to ſay nothing of *that* of Ennius, Ovid's Medea was, at this time, very famous, and as, I think, may be collected from the judgment paſſed upon it by Quinctilian, had ſome of the vices, here charged upon Seneca.

*Ovidii*

*Ovidii Medea*, ſays he, *videtur mihi oſtendere, quantum vir ille præſtare potuerit, ſi ingenio ſuo temperare, quàm indulgere, maluiſſet.* It is not poſſible indeed to ſay exactly, wherein this *intemperance* conſiſted; but it is not unlikely, that, amongſt other things, it might ſhew itſelf in the ſorceries and incantations; a ſubject, intirely ſuited to the wildneſs of Ovid's genius; and which, as appears from his relation of this ſtory in the metamorphoſis, he knew not how to treat without running into ſome exceſs and luxuriance in that part. But whether this were the cauſe, or no, the very treating a ſubject, which had gone through ſuch hands, as Euripides, Ennius, and Ovid, was enough to expoſe a writer of better judgment, than Seneca, to ſome hazard. For, in attempting to outdo originals, founded on the plan of ſimple nature, a writer is in the utmoſt danger of running into affectation and bombaſt. And indeed, without this temptation, our writers have generally found means to incur theſe exceſſes; the very beſt of them being too apt to fill their plots with unnatural incidents, and to heighten their characters into caracatures. Though it may be doubted, whether this hath been owing ſo much to their own ill taſte, as to a vicious compliance with that of the public; for, as one ſays, who well knew the expediency of this craft, and practiſed accordingly, *to write unnatural*

*unnatural things is the moſt probable way of pleaſing them who underſtand not nature.* [Dryd. Pref. to Mock Aſtrol.]

193. Actoris partes chorus, etc.] See alſo *Ariſtotle* [περ. ποιητ. κ. ιή.] The judgment of two ſuch critics, and the practice of wiſe antiquity concurring to eſtabliſh this precept concerning the Chorus, it ſhould thenceforth, one would think, have become a fundamental rule and maxim of the ſtage. And ſo indeed it appeared to ſome few writers. The moſt admired of the French tragic poets ventured to introduce it into two of his latter plays, and with ſuch ſucceſs, that, as one obſerves, *It ſhould, in all reaſon, have diſabuſed his countrymen on this head: l'eſſai heureux de M. Racine, qui les* [*chœurs*] *a fait revivre dans* Athalie *et dans* Esther, *devroit, ce ſemble, nous avoir detrompez ſur cet article.* [P. Brumoi, vol. i. p. 105.] And, before him, our *Milton*, who, with his other great talents, poſſeſſed a ſupreme knowledge of antiquity, was ſo ſtruck with its uſe and beauty, as to attempt to bring it into our language. His *Sampſon Agoniſtes* was, as might be expected, a maſter-piece. But even his credit hath not been ſufficient to reſtore the Chorus. Hear a late Profeſſor of the art declaring, *De choro nihil diſſerui, quia non eſt eſſentialis dramati, atque à neotericis penitus,* et, me judice,

DICE, MERITO, REPUDIATUR. [Præl. Poet. vol. ii. p. 188.] Whence it hath come to paſs, that the chorus hath been thus neglected is not now the inquiry. But that this critic, and all ſuch are greatly out in their judgments, when they preſume to cenſure it in the ancients, muſt appear (if we look no further) from the double uſe, inſiſted on by the poet. For, 1. A *chorus* interpoſing, and bearing a part in the progreſs of the action, gives the repreſentation that *probability* [*d*], and ſtriking reſemblance of real life, which every man of ſenſe perceives and *feels* the want of upon our ſtage; a want, which nothing but ſuch an expedient as the chorus can poſſibly relieve. And, 2. The importance of its other office [*ỷ* 196] to the *utility* of the repreſentation, is ſo great, that, in a moral view, nothing can compenſate for this deficiency. For it is neceſſary to the truth and decorum of characters, that the *manners*, bad as well as good, be drawn in ſtrong, vivid colours, and to that end that immoral ſentiments, forcibly expreſſed and ſpeci-

[*d*] *Quel avantage ne peut il* [*le poëte*] *pas tirer d'une troupe d'acteurs, qui rempliſſent ſa ſcene, qui rendent plus ſenſible la continuité de l'action, et qui la font paroitre* VRAISEMBLABLE, *puiſqu'il n'eſt pas naturel qu'elle ſe paſſe ſans temoins. On ne ſent que trop le vuide de notre Théatre ſans chœurs, &c.* [Le Théatre des Grecs, vol. i. p. 105.]

ouſly

ouſly maintained, be ſometimes *imputed* to the ſpeakers. Hence the ſound philoſophy of the chorus will be conſtantly wanting to rectify the wrong concluſions of the audience, and prevent the ill impreſſions that might otherwiſe be made upon it. Nor let any one ſay, that the audience is well able to do this for itſelf: Euripides did not find even an Athenian theatre ſo quick-ſighted. The ſtory is well known [Sen. Ep. 115.] that when this painter of the *manners* was obliged, by the rules of his art, and the character to be ſuſtained, to put a run of bold ſentiments in the mouth of one his perſons, the people inſtantly took fire, charging the poet with the *imputed* villany, as though it had been his *own*. Now if ſuch an audience could ſo eaſily miſinterpret an attention to the truth of character into the real doctrine of the poet, and this too, when a chorus was at hand to correct and diſabuſe their judgments, what muſt be the caſe, when the *whole* is left to the ſagacity and penetration of the people? The wiſer ſort, 'tis true, have little need of this information. Yet the reflexions of ſober ſenſe on the courſe and occurrences of the repreſentation, clothed in the nobleſt dreſs of poetry, and inforced by the joint powers of *harmony* and *action* (which is the true character of the chorus) might make it, even to ſuch, a no unpleaſant or unprofitable entertain-

ment. But theſe *two* are a ſmall part of the *uſes* of the chorus; which in every light is ſeen ſo important to the truth, decorum, and dignity of the tragic ſcene, that the *modern* ſtage, which hath not thought proper to adopt it, is even, with the advantage of, ſometimes, the juſteſt moral painting and ſublimeſt imagery, but a very faint ſhadow of the *old*; as muſt needs appear to thoſe, who have looked into the antient models, or, diveſting themſelves of modern prejudices, are diſpoſed to conſult the dictates of plain ſenſe. For the uſe of ſuch I once deſigned to have drawn into one view the ſeveral important benefits, ariſing to the drama from the obſervance of this rule, but have the pleaſure to find myſelf prevented by a ſenſible diſſertation of a good French writer, which the reader will find *in the* VIII *Tom. of the hiſtory of the Academy of Inſcriptions and Belles Lettres.*—Or, it may be ſufficient to refer the Engliſh Reader to the late tragedies of ELFRIDA and CARACTACUS; which do honour to modern poetry, and are a better apology, than any I could make, for the antient Chorus.

193. OFFICIUMQUE VIRILE] Heinſius takes *virile* adverbially for *viriliter*. But this is thought harſh. What hinders, but that it may be taken *adjectively?* And then, agreeably to his interpre-

interpretation, *officium virile* will mean a ſtrenuous, diligent office, ſuch as becomes a perſon intereſted in the progreſs of the action. The precept is leveled againſt the practice of thoſe poets, who, though they allot the part of a *perſona dramatis* to the *chorus*, yet for the moſt part make it ſo idle and inſignificant an one, as is of little conſequence in the repreſentation: by which means the advantage of *probability*, intended to be drawn from this uſe of the *chorus*, is, in great meaſure, loſt.

194. NEU QUID MEDIOS INTERCINAT ACTUS, QUOD NON PROPOSITO CONDUCAT ET HAEREAT APTE.] How neceſſary this advice might be to the writers of the Auguſtan age cannot certainly appear; but, if the practice of Seneca may give room for any ſuſpicion, it ſhould ſeem to have been much wanted; in whom I ſcarcely believe there is one ſingle inſtance of the chorus being employed in a manner, conſonant to its true end and character. To ſupport this general cenſure, which may ſeem to bear hard on the poet, let us examine, in this view, one of the beſt of his plays, I mean, the Hippolytus; whoſe chorus, throughout, bears a very idle and unintereſting part—hath no ſhare in the action—and ſings impertinently.

At the end of the *firſt* act, when Phædra had avowed her paſſion for Hippolytus, inſtead of declaiming againſt her horrid purpoſe, enlarging on the danger and impiety of giving way to unnatural luſts, or ſomething of this nature, which was ſurely the office of the chorus, it expatiates wantonly, and with a poetic luxuriance, on the ſovereign, wide-extended powers of love.

In the cloſe of the *ſecond* act, inſtead of applauding the virtuous obſtinacy of Hippolytus, and execrating the mad attempt of Phædra, it coolly ſings the danger of beauty.

The *third* act contains the falſe accuſation of Hippolytus, and the too eaſy deception of Theſeus. What had the chorus to do here, but to warn againſt a too great credulity, and to commiſerate the caſe of the deluded father? Yet it declaims, in general, on the unequal diſtribution of *good* and *ill*.

After the *fourth* act, the chorus ſhould naturally have bewailed the fate of Hippolytus, and reverenced the myſterious conduct of providence in ſuffering the cruel deſtiny of the innocent. This, or ſomething like it, would have been to the purpoſe. But, as if the poet had never heard of this rule of *coherence*, he harangues, in defiance of common ſenſe, on the inſtability of an high fortune, and the ſecurity of a low.

It

It will further juſtify this cenſure of *Seneca*, and be ſome amuſement to the critical reader, to obſerve, how the ſeveral blunders, here charged upon him, aroſe from an injudicious imitation of *Euripides*.

I. There are two places in the Greek Hippolytus, which Seneca ſeems to have had in view in his firſt chorus. We will conſider them both.

1. When the unhappy Phædra at length ſuffers the fatal ſecret of her paſſion to be extorted from her, ſhe falls, as was natural, into all the horrors of ſelf-deteſtation, and determines not to ſurvive the confeſſion of ſo black a crime. In this conjuncture, the *nutrix*, who is not drawn, as in modern tragedy, an unmeaning confident, the mere depoſitary of the poet's ſecrets, but has real manners aſſigned to her, endeavours, with the higheſt beauty of character, to divert theſe horrid intentions, and mitigate in ſome ſort the guilt of her paſſion, by repreſenting to her the reſiſtleſs and all-ſubduing force of love. "Venus, ſays this virtuous "*monitrix*, is not to be withſtood, when ſhe "ruſhes upon us with all her power. Nor is "any part of creation vacant from her influ- "ence. She pervades the air, and glides through "the deeps. We, the inhabitants of the earth, "are all ſubject to her dominion. Nay, aſk of

“ the ancient bards, and they will tell you, that
“ the Gods themſelves are under her controul.”
And ſo goes on, enumerating particular examples, from all which ſhe infers at laſt the neceſſity of Phædra's yielding to her fate. Again,

2. Towards the cloſe of the Greek play, when, upon receiving the tragical ſtory of his ſon's ſufferings, Theſeus began to feel his reſentments give way to the workings of paternal affection, and, on that account, though he was willing to conceal the true motive, even from himſelf, had given orders for the dying Hippolytus to be brought before him, the chorus very properly flings out into that fine addreſs to Venus,

*Σὺ τὰν θεῶν ἄκαμπτον φρένα*, etc.

the ſubſtance of which is, “ That Venus, with
“ her ſwift-winged boy, who traverſes the earth
“ and ocean, ſubdues the ſtubborn hearts of Gods
“ and men: inſpiring into all, on whom her in-
“ fluence reſts, whether inhabitants of the land or
“ deep, and more eſpecially the race of man, a ſoft
“ and ſympathizing tenderneſs; demonſtrating
“ hereby, that ſhe alone extends her all-con-
“ trouling dominion over univerſal nature.”
This ſong, as thus connected with the occaſion, is apparently very proper, and, when reduced from the pomp of lyric eloquence to plain proſe, is only an addreſs of congratulation to the powers

powers of love; confeſſing and celebrating their influence, in thus ſoftening the rigors of a father's hate, and awakening in his breaſt the ſoft touches of returning pity and affection.

Now theſe two places, taken together, are plainly the ground-work of that ſong,

*Diva, non miti generata ponto*, etc.

but how improperly applied, has appeared, in reſpect of the latter of them, from what has been obſerved concerning the *occaſion*; and muſt be acknowledged of the other, from the different *character* of the perſon to whom it is given; and alſo from hence, that the chorus in the Greek poet expreſly condemns the impiety of ſuch ſuggeſtions in the nurſe, and admoniſhes Phædra not to lend an ear to them. The chorus, when it comes to ſing in him, is far otherwiſe employed; not in celebrating the triumphs, but deprecating the pernicious fury of this paſſion, and in lamenting the fatal miſcarriages of Hymeneal love.

II. The ſecond ſong, on the graces of the prince's perſon, and the danger of beauty, which follows on the abrupt departure of Hippolytus, rejecting, with a virtuous diſdain, the mad attempts of Phædra and her confidante, is ſo glaringly improper, as not to admit an excuſe from any example. And yet, I am afraid, the

ſingle

ſingle authority, it has to lean on, is a very ſhort hint, ſlightly dropped by the chorus in the Greek poet on a very different occaſion. It is in the entrance of that ſcene, where the mangled body of Hippolytus is brought upon the ſtage; on the ſight of which the chorus very naturally breaks out,

> Καὶ μὴν ὁ τάλας ὅδε δὴ ϛείχει
> Σάρκας νεαρὰς
> Ξανθόν τε κάρα διαλυμανθείς.

and yet, as the reader of juſt taſte perceives, nothing beyond a ſingle reflexion could have been endured even here.

III. The next ſong of the chorus may ſeem directly copied from Euripides. Yet the two occaſions will be found extremely different. In Seneca Theſeus, under the conviction of his ſon's guilt, inveighs bitterly againſt him, and at laſt ſupplicates the power of Neptune to avenge his crimes. The chorus, as anticipating the effects of this imprecation, arraigns the juſtice of the Gods. In the Greek poet, the father, under the like circumſtances, invokes the ſame avenging power, and, as ſome immediate relief to his rage, pronounces the ſentence of baniſhment, and urges the inſtant execution of it, againſt him. Hippolytus, unable to contend any longer with his father's fury, breaks out into

into that moſt tender complaint (than which nothing was ever more affecting in tragedy)

Ἄρτηρεν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὦ τάλας ἐγώ. etc.

containing his laſt adieu to his country, companions, and friends. The chorus, touched with the pathos of this apoſtrophe, and commiſerating his ſad reverſe of fortune, enters with him into the ſame exceſs of lamentation, and, as the firſt expreſſion of it, lets fall this natural ſentiment, "That though from coolly contemplating the divine ſuperintendency of human "affairs, there reſults abundant confidence and "ſecurity againſt the ills of life, yet when we "look abroad into the lives and fortunes of "men, that confidence is apt to fail us, and "we find ourſelves diſcouraged and confounded "by the promiſcuous and undiſtinguiſhing ap-"pointments of *good* and *ill*." This is the thought, which Seneca hath imitated, and, as his manner is, outraged in his chorus of the third act:

*O magna parens, Natura, Deûm*, etc.

But the great difference lies here. That, whereas in *Euripides* this ſentiment is proper and agreeable to the ſtate and circumſtances of the chorus, which is ever attentive to the progreſs of the action, and is moſt affected by what immediately preſents itſelf to obſervation; in *Seneca* it is quite

quite foreign and impertinent; the attention of the chorus naturally turning, not on the diſtreſſes of Hippolytus, which had not yet commenced, but on the raſhneſs and unhappy deluſion of Theſeus, as being that, which had made the whole ſubject of the preceding ſcene. But the conſequence of that deluſion, it will be ſaid, was obvious. It may be ſo. But the chorus, as any ſenſible ſpectator, is moſt agitated by ſuch reflections, as occur to the mind from thoſe ſcenes of the drama, which are actually paſſing before it, and not from thoſe which have not yet taken place.

IV. What was remarked of the *ſecond* ſong of the chorus will be applicable to the *fourth*, which is abſurdly founded on a ſingle reflexion in the Greek poet, but juſt touched in a couple of lines, though much more naturally introduced. Theſeus, plunged in the deepeſt affliction by the immature death of Phædra, and not enduring the ſight of the ſuppoſed guilty author of it, commands him into baniſhment, "Leſt, "as he goes on, his former triumphs and ſuc-"ceſſes againſt the diſturbers of mankind, ſhould "in conſequence of the impunity of ſuch un-"precedented crimes, henceforth do him no "honour." The chorus, ſtruck with the diſtreſsful ſituation of the old king, and recol-

flecting with him the ſum of his former glories, is made to exclaim,

Οὐκ οἶδ᾽ ὅπως εἴποιμ᾽ ἂν εὐτυχεῖν τινα
Θνητῶν· τὰ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτ᾽ ἀνέστραπται πάλιν.

i. e. *there is henceforth no ſuch thing, as human happineſs, when the firſt examples of it are thus ſadly reverſed.* Which caſual remark Seneca ſeizes and extends through a whole chorus; where it viſibly ſerves to no other end, but to uſurp a place, deſtined for far more natural and affecting ſentiments.

If I have been rather long upon this head, it is becauſe I conceive this critique on the Hippolytus will let the reader, at once, into the true character of *Seneca*; which he, now ſees, is that of a mere *declamatory moraliſt.* So little deſerving is he of the reputation of a juſt dramatic poet.

196. Ille bonis faveatque, etc.] *The chorus,* ſays the poet, *is to take the ſide of the good and virtuous,* i. e. is always to ſuſtain a moral character. But this will need ſome explanation and reſtriction. To conceive aright of its office, we muſt ſuppoſe the *chorus* to be a number of perſons, by ſome probable cauſe aſſembled together, as witneſſes and ſpectators of the great action of the drama. Such perſons, as they cannot be wholly unintereſted in what paſſes

before

before them, will very naturally bear ſome ſhare in the repreſentation. This will principally conſiſt in declaring their ſentiments, and indulging their reflections freely on the ſeveral events and diſtreſſes as they ſhall ariſe. Thus we ſee the *moral*, attributed to the chorus, will be no other than the dictates of plain ſenſe; ſuch as muſt be obvious to every thinking obſerver of the action, who is under the influence of no peculiar partialities from *affection* or *intereſt*. Though even theſe may be ſuppoſed in caſes, where the character, towards which they *draw*, is repreſented as virtuous.

A chorus, thus conſtituted, muſt always, it is evident, take the part of virtue; becauſe this is the natural and almoſt neceſſary determination of mankind, in all ages and nations, when acting freely and unconſtrained. But then it is to be obſerved,

1. That this moral character, or approbation of virtue, muſt alſo be conſiderably influenced by the common and eſtabliſhed notions of *right* and *wrong*; which, though in eſſential points, for the moſt part, uniformly the ſame under all circumſtances, yet will, in ſome particular inſtances, be much diſtorted by the corrupt principles and practices of different countries and times. Hence the *moral* of the ſtage will not be always ſtrictly philoſophical; as reflecting to us

the

the image not of the ſage's ſpeculation, but, of the obvious ſenſe of common, untutor'd minds. The reader will find this obſervation applied to the caſe of the *chorus* in the Medea, in note on ỳ 200, and it might further, perhaps, be extended to the vindication of ſome others, to which the ignorant temerity of modern criticiſm hath taken occaſion to object. But,

2. The *moral character* of the chorus will not only depend very much on the ſeveral miſtaken notions and uſages, which may happen, under different circumſtances, to corrupt and defile *morality*; but allowance is alſo to be made for the *falſe policies*, which may prevail in different countries; and eſpecially if they conſtitute any part of the ſubject, which the drama would repreſent. If the *chorus* be made up of free citizens, whether of a republic, or the milder and more equal royalties, they can be under little or no temptation to ſuppreſs or diſguiſe their real ſentiments on the ſeveral events, preſented to their obſervation; but will be at liberty to purſue their natural inclination of ſpeaking the truth. But ſhould this venerable aſſembly, inſtead of ſuſtaining the dignity of free ſubjects, be, in fact, a company of ſlaves, devoted by long uſe to the ſervice and intereſts of a maſter, or awed, by the dread of tyrannical power, into an implicit compliance with his will, the baleful

effect,

effect, which this very different ſituation muſt have on their moral character, is evident. Their opinions of perſons and things will ceaſe to be oracular; and the interpoſition of the *chorus* will be more likely to injure the cauſe of virtue, than to aſſiſt and promote it. Nor can any objection be made, on this account, to the conduct of the poet; who keeps to nature and probability in drawing the chorus with this imperfectly moral character; and is only anſwerable for his ill choice of a ſubject, in which ſuch a pernicious repreſentation is required. An inſtance will explane my meaning more perfectly. The chorus in the *Antigone*, contrary to the rule of Horace, takes the ſide of the *wicked*. It conſiſts of a number of old Thebans, aſſembled by the order of Creon to aſſiſt, or rather to be preſent, at a kind of mock council; in which he meant to iſſue his cruel interdict of the rites of ſepulture to the body of Polynices; a matter of the higheſt conſequence in thoſe days, and upon which the whole diſtreſs of the play turns. This veteran troop of vaſſals enter at once into the horrid views of the tyrant, and obſequiouſly go along with him in the projects of his cruelty; calmly, and without the appearance of any virtuous emotion, conſenting to them all. The conſequence is that the interludes of the chorus

are,

are, for the moſt part, impertinent, or ſomething worſe; cautiouſly avoiding ſuch uſeful reflexions, as the nature of the caſe muſt ſuggeſt, or indulging, by their flatteries, the impotent tyranny of their prince. And yet no blame can be fairly charged upon the great poet, who hath ſurely repreſented, in the moſt ſtriking colours, the pernicious character, which a chorus, under ſuch circumſtances, would naturally ſuſtain. The fault muſt therefore fall, where the poet manifeſtly intended to throw it, on the accurſed ſpirit of deſpotiſm; which extinguiſhes, or over-rules, the ſuggeſtions of common ſenſe; kills the very ſeeds of virtue, and perverts the moſt ſacred and important offices, ſuch as is that of the chorus, into the means and inſtruments of vice. The glory, which he deſigned, by this repreſentation, to reflect upon the government and policy of his own ſtate, is too glaring to be overlooked. And he hath artfully contrived to counter-act any ill impreſſions on the minds of the people, from the proſtituted authority of the chorus, by charging them, in the perſons of Hæmon and Antigone, with their real motives and views. In all indifferent things, in which the paſſions or intereſts of their maſter were not concerned, even this chorus would of courſe preſerve a moral character. But we are to look for it no further.

This is the utmoſt verge and boundary of a ſlave's virtue. An important truth, which, among many greater and more momentous inſtructions, furniſhes this to the dramatic poet, "That, if "he would apply the chorus to the uſes of a "ſound and uſeful moral, he muſt take his ſub-"jects, not from the annals of deſpotic tyranny, "but from the great events, which occur in the "records of free and equal commonwealths."

200. ILLE TEGAT COMMISSA] This important advice is not always eaſy to be followed. Much indeed will depend on the choice of the ſubject, and the artful conſtitution of the fable. Yet, with all his care, the ableſt writer will ſometimes find himſelf embarraſſed by the chorus. I would here be underſtood to ſpeak chiefly of the moderns. For the antients, though it has not been attended to, had ſome peculiar advantages over us in this reſpect, reſulting from the principles and practices of thoſe times. For, as it hath been obſerved of the antient epic muſe, that ſhe borrowed much of her ſtate and dignity from the falſe *theology* of the pagan world, ſo, I think, it may be juſtly ſaid of the antient tragic, that ſhe has derived great advantages of probability from its miſtaken *moral*. If there be truth in this reflection, it will help to juſtify ſome of the antient choirs, that have been moſt

objected

objected to by the moderns. To give an inſtance or two, and leave the curious reader to extend the obſervation at his leiſure.

I. In the Hippolytus of Euripides, the chorus, which is let into Phædra's deſign of killing herſelf, ſuffers this raſh attempt to take effect, rather than divulge the intruſted ſecret. This, to a modern reader, ſeems ſtrange; and we are ready to arraign the poet of having allotted a very unfit and unbecoming part to his *chorus*, which, in order to obſerve a *critical*, is thus made to violate a *moral* precept, or at leaſt to ſacrifice the more eſſential part of its character to a punctilio of honour. But the caſe was quite otherwiſe. This ſuicide of Phædra, which, on our ſtricter moral plan, is repugnant to the plain rules of duty, was, in the circumſtances ſuppoſed, fully juſtified on the pagan ſyſtem. Phædra had confeſſed the ſecret of her criminal paſſion. By the forward zeal of her confident, her diſgrace is made known to Hippolytus; and thereby, as ſhe conceives, rendered notorious to the public. In this diſtreſs ſhe had only one way to vindicate her honour, and that was at the expence of her life. Rather than bear the inſupportable load of public infamy, ſhe kills herſelf. That this was a juſtifiable cauſe of ſelf-murder in the eye of the chorus is clear from the reaſon, there aſſigned, of her conduct, manifeſtly

in approbation of it. "Phædra, ſays the chorus, "oppreſſed and born down by her afflictions, has "recourſe to this expedient of ſuicide,

> τάν τ' εὔδοξον ἀνθαιρευμένα
> Φάμαν, ἀπαλλάσσουσά
> Τ' ἀλγειὸν φρενῶν ἔρωτα.

"for the ſake of her good fame, and in order "to free herſelf from the tortures of a cruel "paſſion." And how agreeable this was to the pagan ſyſtem, in general, let the reader collect from the following teſtimonies in Cicero: *Si omnia fugiendæ turpitudinis adipiſcendæque honeſtatis cauſâ faciemus, non modo ſtimulos doloris, ſed etiam fulmina fortunæ contemnamus licebit: præſertim cum paratum ſit illud ex heſternâ diſputatione perfugium. Ut enim, ſi, cui naviganti prædones inſequantur, Deus quis dixerit, Ejice te navi; præſto eſt, qui excipiat,* &c. *omnem omittas timorem; ſic, urgentibus aſperis et odioſis doloribus, ſi tanti non ſiut, ut ferendi ſint, quo ſit confugiendum vides.* [Tuſc. Diſp. l. ii. 26.] And, again, in the cloſe of the V[th] diſputation, *Mihi quidem in vita ſervanda videtur illa lex, quæ in Græcorum conviviis obtinet: Aut bibat, inquit, aut abeat. Et recte. Aut enim fruatur aliquis pariter cum aliis voluptate potandi; aut, ne ſobrius in violentiam vinolentorum incidat, ante diſcedat: ſic* INJURIAS

FORTUNÆ,

FORTUNÆ, QUAS FERRE NEQUEAS, DEFUGIENDO RELINQUAS.

II. Another example may, I think, be fetched from the *Medea*. Scarcely any thing has been more the ſubject of modern cenſure, than the part, which the chorus is made to act in this tragedy. *Whence comes it*, ſays M. Dacier, *that the chorus, which conſiſts of Corinthian women, is faithful to a ſtranger againſt their ſovereign* [*e*]?

[*e*] See alſo to the ſame purpoſe P. Corneille's *Exam. ſur la Medée*. If the objection, made by theſe critics, to the part of the chorus, be, *the improbability*, as was explained at large in the preceding note, *of a ſlave's taking the ſide of virtue againſt the pleaſure of his tyrant*, the manifeſt difference of the two caſes will ſhew it to be without the leaſt foundation. For 1. the chorus in the Medea conſiſts of women, whom compaſſion and a ſecret jealouſy and indignation at ſo flagrant an inſtance of the violated faith of marriage, attach, by the moſt natural connexion of intereſts, to the cauſe and perſon of the injured queen. In the Antigone, it is compoſed of old courtiers, devoted, by an habitude of ſlavery, to the will of a maſter, aſſembled, by his expreſs appointment, as creatures of his tyranny, and, prompted, by no ſtrong movements of ſelf-love, to take part againſt him. 2. In the Antigone, the part of Creon is *principal*. Every ſtep, in the progreſs of the play, depends ſo immediately upon him, that he is almoſt conſtantly upon the ſtage. No reflexions could therefore be made by the chorus, nor any part againſt him be undertaken, but directly in

This good Frenchman, it ſeems, thought it a kind of treaſon, even on the ſtage, and where a moral character was to be ſuſtained, to take part againſt a tyrant. But he will further ſay, that the moral character of the chorus was forfeited in thus concealing, and, in effect, abetting the impious cruelties of Medea. *The laws of nature and of God were tranſgreſſed in rendering this ſervice to her.* All which is very true, ſuppoſing the reader to judge of this matter by the purer chriſtian moral. But how will he prove this to be the caſe on the received notions and practices of paganiſm? It appears, this critic did not apprehend, what a moderate attention to ancient hiſtory and manners might have taught him, that the violation of conjugal fidelity was a crime of that high nature, as to deſerve

his preſence, and at their own manifeſt hazard. The very reverſe of this is the caſe in the Medea. Creon is there but a ſubaltern perſon—has a very ſmall part aſſigned him in the conduct of the play—is, in fact, introduced upon the ſtage but in one ſingle ſcene. The different ſituation of the chorus, reſulting from hence, gives occaſion for the wideſt difference in their conduct. They may ſpeak their reſentments freely. Unawed by the frowns and menaces of their tyrant, they are left at liberty to follow the ſuggeſtions of virtue. Nothing here offends againſt the law of probability, or, in the leaſt, contradicts the reaſoning about the chorus in the Antigone.

in the public opinion, and to excuſe, the ſevereſt vengeance of retaliation. This the laws expreſly allowed to the injuries of the huſband. And, it is probable, the wife might incline to think the reaſon of the caſe extended alſo to her. What is certain is, that we find ſome of the deepeſt ſcenes of horror, which antient hiſtory furniſhes, or antient fiction could paint, wrought up from the occaſion of this neglect of conjugal faith. And it is well obſerved by one, in ſpeaking of the difference between the antient and modern ſtage, that what is now held the fit ſubject of comic mirth and ridicule in chriſtian theatres, was never employed but to ſtir up the utmoſt horror and commiſeration, on the heathen. "We do not find, ſays this agreeable writer, "any comedy in ſo polite an author, as Terence, "raiſed upon the violations of the marriage-"bed. The falſhood of the wife or huſband "has given occaſion to noble tragedies; but a "Scipio and Lælius would have looked upon "inceſt or murder, to have been as proper ſub-"jects for comedy." This is ſtrictly and preciſely the truth. And, therefore, as the crimes of inceſt or murder were believed deſerving of the higheſt puniſhment by the Pagans, and every good man was ready to intereſt himſelf in ſeeing it inflicted [*f*]; ſo, in the caſe of the open vio-

[*f*] See note on ℣ 127.

lation of the marriage-compact, the fierceſt acts of revenge were juſtified in the public opinion, and paſſed only for acts of ſtrict juſtice. And for this, if we wanted further authority, we have the expreſs word of the chorus. The Corinthian women do not barely conſent to ſecrecy, in virtue of an extorted oath or promiſe (though more might have been ſaid for this, than every reader is aware of) but in conſequence of their entire and full approbation of her intentions. For thus, in anſwer to Medea's petition to them, without the leaſt reſerve or heſitation, they are made to reply,

> Δράσω τάδ'· ἐνδίκως γὰρ ἐκτίσῃ πόσιν
> Μήδεια.

*I will do it; for this revenge on a huſband is juſt.* We ſee then the chorus, in keeping the ſecret of Medea's murders, was employed in its great office of countenancing and ſupporting *ſalubrem juſtitiam, wholeſome juſtice.* And, therefore, the ſcholiaſt, with M. Dacier's leave, gave a fit and proper account of the matter (ſo far was it from being *impious* and *ridiculous)* in ſaying, *that the Corinthian women being free*, i. e. not devoted to the ſervice of Creon, by the ſpecial duties of any perſonal attachment, *take the ſide of juſtice, as the chorus is wont to do on other occaſions.* The circumſtance of their *freedom* is properly mentioned.

For

For this diſtinguiſhes their caſe from that of the *nutrix*, who upon receiving the account of Jaſon's cruelties, cries out,

> Ὄλοιτο μὲν μὴ, δεσπότης γάρ ἐς' ἐμὸς,
> Ἀτὰρ κακός γ' ὢν εἰς φίλους ἁλίσκεται.

And that the chorus enter'd into Medea's deſigns againſt her huſband, the tyrant Creon, and her rival, on reaſons of juſtice and equity only, and not (as is haſtily believed by ſome, who have not enough attended to the decorum of the antient tragedy) for the ſake of forwarding the poet's plot, may be certainly ſhewn. For when, in the fury of her reſentments, and as the full completion of her revenge, the mother comes to propoſe the murder of her innocent children, the chorus ſtarts with horror at the thought, diſſuades her from it in the moſt earneſt and affecting manner [g], and ſeems to have concealed the dreadful ſecret only from the perſuaſion, that it was too horrid and unnatural to be perpetrated. The reader will collect this

[g] *For her own ſake*, as is pleaded, *and in obedience to the laws*,

> Σέ τ' ὠφελεῖν θέλουσα, καὶ νόμοις βροτῶν
> Ξυλλαμβάνουσα, δρᾷν σ' ἀπεννέπω τάδε. ℣ 812.

which ſhews, that the other murders were not againſt the ſpirit of the laws, whatever became of the letter of them.

with

with pleaſure, by turning to the fine ſong, which follows. It may be further obſerved, that Medea herſelf, in opening this laſt purpoſe of her rage to the chorus, exacts fidelity of them only, *as they wiſhed well to an injured queen, and were women*;

Εἴπερ φρονεῖς εὖ δεσπόταις, γυνή τ' ἔφυς.

which is beautifully contrived by the poet, to diſcriminate the two caſes, and to intimate to us, that reaſons of juſtice were now no longer to be pleaded.

In ſum, though theſe acts of ſevere avenging juſtice might not be according to the expreſs letter of the laws, or the more refined concluſions of the PORCH or ACADEMY; yet there is no doubt, that they were, in the general account, eſteemed fit and reaſonable. And, it is to be obſerved, in order to paſs a right judgment on the antient chorus, that, though in virtue of their office, they were obliged univerſally to ſuſtain a moral character; yet this moral was rather political and popular, than ſtrictly legal or philoſophic. Which is alſo founded on good reaſon. The ſcope and end of the antient theatre being to ſerve the intereſts of virtue and ſociety, on the principles and ſentiments, already ſpread and admitted amongſt the people, and not to correct old errors, and inſtruct them in philoſophic truth.

202. TIBIA

202. Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco, etc.] [from ✝ 202 to ✝ 220.] This is one of thoſe many paſſages in the epiſtle, about which the critics have ſaid a great deal, without explaining any thing. In ſupport of what I mean to offer, as the true interpretation, I obſerve,

That the poet's intention certainly was, not to cenſure the *falſe* refinements of their ſtage-muſic; but, in a ſhort digreſſive hiſtory (ſuch as the didactic form will ſometimes require) to deſcribe the riſe and progreſs of the *true*. This I collect, 1. From *the expreſſion itſelf*; which cannot, without violence, be underſtood in any other way. For, as to the words *licentia* and *præceps*, which have occaſioned much of the difficulty, the *firſt* means a *freer uſe*, not a *licentiouſneſs*, properly ſo called; and the *other* only expreſſes a vehemence and rapidity of language, naturally productive of a quicker elocution, ſuch as muſt of courſe attend the more numerous harmony of the lyre:—not, as M. Dacier tranſlates it, *une eloquence termeraire et outrée*, an extravagant ſtraining and affectation of ſtyle. 2. From *the reaſon of the thing*; which makes it incredible, that the muſic of the theatre ſhould then be moſt complete, when the times were barbarous, and entertainments of this kind little encouraged or underſtood. 3. From *the character*

*of*

*of that muſic itſelf*; for the rudeneſs of which, Horace, in effect, apologizes in defending it only on the ſcore of the imperfect ſtate of the ſtage, and the ſimplicity of its judges. But what ſhall we ſay then to thoſe lines,

*Indoctus quid enim ſaperet liberque laborum,*
*Ruſticus urbano confuſus, turpis honeſto?*

which ſeem to imply a cenſure on theſe Improvements, as unworthy the approbation of *wiſe* men; contrary to what I have juſt now ſuppoſed to be the ſcope of this whole paſſage.

On the ſtricteſt attention, I believe we are to underſtand them as a *Sneer*, in paſſing, on what grave and philoſophic men have obſerved of theſe refinements, which they conſtantly treat, as *Corruptions*. See note on ℣ 218. But the mixed auditories of theſe days, ſays the poet with his uſual *badinage*, were not ſo *wiſe*. 'Tis, as if he had ſaid, " What I mention here as an improvement in dramatic muſic is, in the ideas and language of ſome grave men, an abuſe and perverſion of it to immoral purpoſes. It may be ſo: but conſider, for what ſorts of people theſe theatrical entertainments were deſigned: for the *ignorant clown and citizen, the plebeian and gentleman*, huddled together into one confuſed maſs, and crowding to the theatre, on a holyday, for ſome relief from their ordinary toils and occupations.

And alaſs, what do theſe men know, or conſider of this auſtere *wiſdom?*

But the caſt of the whole paſſage is, beſides, ſuch as favours the ſuppoſition of an intended Irony. Hence the *Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco vincta*, &c. delivered in the uſual tone of declaimers againſt modern manners. Hence the epithets, *frugi caſtuſque verecunduſque*, to denote the quality of thoſe who aſſiſted, of old, at theſe *virtuous* entertainments. And hence the enormity of that ſtate of things, when the people were afterwards permitted to regale on holy-days, *impune*. This intention too accounts for the terms *licentia, luxuries, facundia, præceps*, and others, which being of ambiguous interpretation, the poet purpoſely choſe, to mimic, and humour, as it were, the objectors in their favourite language on this occaſion. Till at laſt, impatient to continue the raillery any further, he concludes at once with an air of ſolemnity very proper to confound the impertinence of ſuch criticiſm.

Utiliumque ſagax rerum, et divina futuri
Sortilegis non diſcrepuit ſententia Delphis.

All this the reader ſees is agreeable to the poet's *preſcription* elſewhere,

—Sermone opus eſt triſti, ſæpe *jocoſo*.

and

and indeed to his own *practice* on an hundred occaſions. So that on the whole there is little doubt of his intention in the lines,

Indoctus quid enim *ſaperet*, etc.

At leaſt, in this view the poet, I am apt to think, will be found intelligible and even elegant. Whereas, on any other ſuppoſition of his numerous commentators, I cannot ſee that the verſes before us (as they here ſtand) have either propriety or common ſenſe.

The interpretation then of this whole paſſage, from ℣ 202 to 220, will ſtand thus. "The "Tibia, ſays the poet, was at firſt *low* and *ſimple*. "The *firſt*, as beſt agreeing to the *ſtate of the* "*ſtage*, which required only a ſoft muſic to go "along with, and aſſiſt the chorus; there being "no large and crowded theatres to *fill* in thoſe "days. And the *latter*, as ſuiting beſt to the "*ſtate of the times*; whoſe ſimplicity and frugal "manners exacted the ſevereſt temperance, as in "every thing elſe, ſo, in their dramatic orna-"ments and decorations. But, when conqueſt "had enlarged the territory, and widened the "walls of Rome; and, in conſequence thereof, "a ſocial ſpirit had diſpelled that ſeverity of "manners, by the introduction of frequent "feſtival ſolemnities; then, as was natural to "expect, a freer and more varied harmony took

"place.

" place. Nor let it be objected that this *freer*
" *harmony* was itſelf an abuſe, a corruption of
" the ſevere and *moral* muſic of antient times.
" Alas! we were not as yet ſo *wiſe*, to ſee the
" inconveniencies of this improvement. And
" how ſhould we, conſidering the nature and
" end of theſe theatrical entertainments, and
" the ſort of men of which our theatres were
" made up? But, leaving the Philoſopher to
" ſpeculate at his eaſe, on this matter, thus, in
" *fact*, it was, " that the *Tibicen*, the muſician,
" who played to the declamation in the acts, in-
" ſtead of the rude and ſimpler ſtrain of the old
" times, gave a richneſs and variety of tone;
" and, inſtead of the old inactive poſture, added
" the grace of motion to his art. Juſt in the
" ſame manner, continues he, it happened to
" the *Lyre*, i. e. *the muſic in the chorus*, which
" originally, as that of the *Tibia*, was ſevere
" and ſimple; but, by degrees, acquired a
" quicker and more expreſſive modulation, ſuch
" as correſponded to the more elevated and paſ-
" ſionate turn of the poet's ſtyle, and the diviner
" enthuſiaſm of his ſentiment." All that is fur-
ther wanting to ſupport and juſtify this inter-
pretation, will be found in the notes on parti-
cular paſſages.

203. TENUIS SIMPLEXQUE, etc.] It may here be obſerved of the manner, in which the poet hath choſen to deliver this whole part [from ỳ 202 to 295] that, beſides its other uſes, it tends directly to convey to his readers, and impreſs upon them in the ſtrongeſt manner, the principal inſtruction, he has in view, and with which the epiſtle more expreſly concludes, *viz. The uſes and importance of a ſpirit of critical application.* For, in ſpeaking of the *ſtage muſic*, of the *ſatyrs*, and the *Greek tragedy* (all which come naturally in his way, and are very artfully connected) he chuſes to deduce the account of each from its ruder and leſs poliſhed original; tracing it through its ſeveral ſucceſſive ſtages, and marking out to us the gradual poliſh and refinement, which it acquired from increaſing diligence and correctneſs. The *Tibia* at firſt was *ſimple* and *rude*—The *ſatyrs naked* and *barbarous*—and the *Greek tragedy itſelf deformed and ſhapeleſs* in the cart of Theſpis. Care and attention reformed each. It follows,

*Nil intentatum noſtri liquere poetæ, etc.*

*i. e.* our poets have not been wanting in their attempts to excel in theſe ſeveral particulars. What is neceſſary to their ſucceſs is, *limæ labor et mora.* If the reader bear this in mind, it will help

help him to ſee the order and ſcope of this part more diſtinctly.

204. ASPIRARE ET ADESSE CHORIS, etc.] *Chorus* here means the whole dramatic performance, which was originally nothing elſe.

206. UTPOTE PARVUS, ET FRUGI CASTUSQUE VERECUNDUSQUE, etc.] M. *Dacier* finds here *four* cauſes *of the little regard the antients had for plays* [he ſhould have ſaid, of their being ſatisfied with the *Tibia*, all rude and ſimple as is here deſcribed] *la premiere, que le peuple Romain étoit encore alors en petit nombre: la ſeconde, qu'il étoit ſage: la troiſiéme, qu'il étoit chaſte, c'eſt à dire pieux: et la quatriéme, qu'il étoit modeſte.* But the three laſt epithets are ſynonymous, all of them expreſſing what, though he took three gueſſes for it, he had the ill fortune to miſs at laſt, *that plainneſs and ſimplicity* of character, *that frugal reſerve and moderation in the uſe of any thing*, which ſo eſſentially belongs to rude minds, uninſtructed in the arts of life. His *four* cauſes are, in fact, then but two; which have been fully conſidered in note on ỳ 202.

211. ACCESSIT NUMERISQUE MODISQUE LICENTIA MAJOR.] M. *Dacier* takes *licentia major* in a bad ſenſe, as implying *laſciveté, a culpable and*

 *licentious*

*licentious refinement*. But the *licence*, here ſpoken of, with regard to *numbers* and *ſounds*, like that in another place, which reſpects *words* [l. 51.] is one of thoſe, which is allowed, when *ſumpta pudenter*. The comparative *major*, which is a *palliative*, ſhews this; and is further juſtified by a like paſſage in *Cicero*, *De Oratore* [l. iii. c. 48.] where ſpeaking of this very licence in poetry, he obſerves, that out of the Heroic and Iambic meaſure, which were at firſt ſtrictly obſerved, there aroſe by degrees the Anapæſt, *procerior quidam numerus*, *et ille licentior et divitior Dithyrambus*; evidently not condemning this change, but oppoſing it to the rigorous and confined meaſure of the elder poets. But the expreſſion itſelf occurs in the piece entitled *Orator*, in which, comparing the freedoms of the poetical and oratorial ſtyle, *in ea* [i. e. *poetica*] ſays he, *licentiam ſtatuo majorem eſſe*, *quam in nobis*, *faciendorum jungendorumque verborum*. The poet ſays, this *licence* extended *numeris modiſque*, the former of which words will expreſs that *licence of metre*, ſpoken of by *Cicero*, and which is further explained ỳ 256, &c. where an account is given of the improvement of the Iambic verſe.

214. SIC PRISCAE, — — — ARTI
TIBICEN, etc.
SIC FIDIBUS ETIAM, etc.]

This

This is the application of what hath been ſaid, in general, concerning the refinement of theatrical muſic to the caſe of *tragedy.* Some commentators ſay, and to *comedy.* But in this they miſtake, as will appear preſently. M. *Dacier* hath, I know not what conceit about a compariſon betwixt the *Roman* and *Greek* ſtage. His reaſon is, *that the lyre was uſed in the Greek chorus, as appears,* he ſays, *from Sophocles playing upon this inſtrument himſelf in one of his tragedies.* And was it not uſed too in the Roman chorus, as appears from Nero's playing upon it in ſeveral tragedies? But the learned critic did not apprehend this matter. Indeed from the caution, with which his guides, the dealers in antiquities, always touch this point, it ſhould ſeem, that they too had no very clear conceptions of it. The caſe I take to have been this: The *Tibia,* as being moſt proper to accompany the declamation of the acts, *cantanti ſuccinere,* was conſtantly employed, as well in the Roman tragedy as comedy. This appears from many authorities. I mention only two from Cicero. *Quam multa* [Acad. l. ii. 7.] *quæ nos fugiunt in cantu, exaudiunt in eo genere exercitati: Qui, primo inflatu Tibicinis, Antiopam eſſe aiunt aut Andromacham, cum nos ne ſuſpicemur quidem.* The other is ſtill more expreſs. In his piece, entitled *Orator,* ſpeaking of the negligence of the Roman

writers, in reſpect of *numbers*, he obſerves, *that there were even many paſſages in their tragedies, which, unleſs the* TIBIA *played to them, could not be diſtinguiſhed from mere proſe: quæ, niſi cum Tibicen acceſſerit, orationi ſint ſolutæ ſimillima.* One of theſe paſſages is expreſly quoted from *Thyeſtes*, a tragedy of *Ennius*; and, as appears from the meaſure, taken out of one of the acts. It is clear then, that the *Tibia* was certainly uſed in the *declamation* of tragedy. But now the ſong of the tragic chorus, being of the nature of the ode, of courſe required *Fides*, the lyre, the peculiar and appropriated inſtrument of the lyric Muſe. And this is clearly collected, if not from expreſs teſtimonies; yet from ſome occaſional hints dropt by the antients. For, 1. the lyre, we are told, [Cic. De Leg. ii. 9. & 15.] and is agreed on all hands, was an inſtrument of the Roman theatre; but it was not employed in comedy. This we certainly know from the ſhort accounts of the muſic prefixed to Terence's plays. 2. Further, the *Tibicen*, as we ſaw, accompanied the declamation of the acts in tragedy. It remains then, that the proper place of the lyre was, where one ſhould naturally look for it, in the ſongs of the chorus; but we need not go further than this very paſſage for a proof. It is unqueſtionable, that the poet is here ſpeaking of the chorus only; the following

lines not admitting any other poſſible interpretation. By *Fidibus* then is neceſſarily underſtood the inſtrument peculiarly uſed in it. Not that it need be ſaid that the *Tibia* was never uſed in the chorus. The contrary ſeems expreſſed in a paſſage of Seneca, [Ep. lxxxiv.] and in Julius Pollux [l. iv. 15. § 107.] 'Tis ſufficient, if the *lyre* was uſed ſolely, or principally in it, at this time. In this view, the whole digreſſion is more pertinent and connects better. The poet had before been ſpeaking of tragedy. All his directions, from l. 100. reſpect this ſpecies of the drama only. The application of what he had ſaid concerning muſic, is then moſt naturally made, 1. to the *Tibia*, the muſic of the acts; and, 2. to *Fides*, that of the choir: thus confining himſelf, as the tenor of this part required, to tragedy only. Hence is ſeen the miſtake, not only of M. Dacier, whoſe comment is in every view inſupportable; but, as was hinted, of Heinſius, Lambin, and others, who, with more probability, explained this of the Roman comedy and tragedy. For though *Tibia* might be allowed to ſtand for comedy, as oppoſed to *Tragœdia*, [as in fact, we find it in l. ii. Ep. 1. 98.] that being the only inſtrument employed in it; yet, in ſpeaking expreſly of the muſic of the ſtage, *Fides* could not determinately enough, and in contradiſtinction to *Tibia*, denote that of

 tragedy,

tragedy, it being an inſtrument uſed ſolely, or principally in the chorus; of which, the context ſhews, he alone ſpeaks. It is further to be obſerved, that, in the application here made, beſides the muſic, the poet takes in the other improvements of the tragic chorus, theſe happening, as from the nature of the thing they would do, at the ſame time.

214. SIC PRISCAE MOTUMQUE ET LUXURIEM]. Theſe two words are employed to expreſs that *quicker movement*, and *richer modulation* of the new muſic; the peculiar defects of the *old* being, 1. That it moved too ſlowly, and 2. That it had no compaſs or variety of notes. It was that *movement*, that velocity and vehemence of the muſic, which Roſcius required to have ſlackened in his old age.

215. TRAXITQUE VAGUS PER PULPITA VESTEM.] This expreſſes not only the improvement ariſing from the ornament of proper dreſſes, but from the grace of motion: not only the *actor*, whoſe peculiar office it was, but the *minſtrel* himſelf, as appears from hence, conforming his geſture in ſome ſort to the muſic.

Of the uſe and propriety of theſe geſtures, or dances, it will not be eaſy for us, who ſee no ſuch things attempted on the modern ſtage, to

form

form any very clear or exact notions. What we cannot doubt of is, 1. That the ſeveral theatrical dances of the antients were ſtrictly conformable to the genius of the different ſpecies of compoſition, to which they were applied. 2. That, therefore, the tragic dance, which more eſpecially accompanied the chorus, muſt have been expreſſive of the higheſt gravity and decorum, tending to inſpire ideas of what is *becoming*, *graceful*, and *majeſtic*; in which view we cannot but perceive the important aſſiſtance it muſt needs lend to virtue, and how greatly it muſt contribute to ſet all her graces and attractions in the faireſt light. 3. This idea of the antient tragic dance, is not ſolely formed upon our knowledge of the conformity, beforementioned; but is further collected from the name, uſually given to it, which was Εμμέλεια. This word cannot well be tranſlated into our language; but expreſſes all that grace and concinnity of motion, which the dignity of the choral ſong required. 4. Laſtly, it muſt give us a very high notion of the moral effect of this dance, when we find the ſevere Plato admitting it into his commonwealth.

216. SIC FIDIBUS ETIAM VOCES, etc.] He is here ſpeaking of the great improvement in

the tragic chorus, after the Roman conqueſts, when the Latin writers began to enquire

*Quid Sophocles et Theſpis et Æſchylus utile ferrent.*

This improvement conſiſted, 1. In a more inſtructive moral ſentiment: 2. In a more ſublime and animated expreſſion; which of courſe produced, 3. A greater vehemence in the declamation: to which conformed, 4. A more numerous and rapid muſic. All theſe particulars are here expreſſed, but, as the reaſon of the thing required, in an inverted order. The muſic of the lyre (that being his ſubject and introducing the reſt) being placed firſt, the declamation, as attending that, next; the language, *facundia*, that is, the ſubject of the declamation, next; and the ſentiment, *ſententia*, the ground and baſis of the language, laſt.

*Et tulit eloquium inſolitum facundia præceps.*

literally, "A vehemence and rapidity of language produced an unuſual vehemence and rapidity of elocution in the declaimer!" This "rapidity of language," is exactly the ſame, as that Cicero ſpeaks of in Democritus and Plato, [*Orat.* 638. *Elz.*] which, becauſe of its quick and rapid movement, *quod incitatius feratur*, ſome critics thought to be poetical. *Unaccuſtomed*, we may obſerve, is indifferently a *cenſure* or *encomium*, according as the preceding

ſtate

ſtate of the thing ſpoken of was *wrong*, or *right.* Much the ſame may be concluded of *præceps*; its *literal* ſenſe is a degree of *motion* in any thing above what it had before. This may be *exceſſive*, or otherwiſe, as it chances: When applyed to *the bleak Eaſt wind, diſperſing a flight of bees, and daſhing them on the ſtream,*

*ſi forte morantes*
*Sparſerit, aut præceps Neptuno immerſerit Eurus.*
Virg. Georg. iv. 29.

the epithet implies *exceſs*; but when ſpoken of the *gentle South, whoſe ſtrongeſt gale is but ſufficient to drive the willing ſhip to port,* [Æn. vii. 410.] *Præcipiti delata Noto,* it then only expreſſes *due meaſure.*

As for the criticiſm from Quintilian, who oppoſes *præcipitia* to *ſublimibus*, it is doubly impertinent: 1. As the ſenſe is neceſſarily fixed by its oppoſition to *ſublimibus*: and 2. As the word is here uſed, not as implying *motion*, but *height*, in which view its ſenſe is *abſolute*, and always denotes *exceſs.*

218. Utiliumque sagax rerum, et divina futuri, Sortilegis non discrepuit sententia Delphis.] It is amazing that theſe two lines ſhould ever have been miſunderſtood as a cenſure, the import of them being highly

highly *encomiaſtic*, yet with great exactneſs declaring the ſpecific boaſt and excellence of the Chorus; which lay, as Heinſius hath well obſerved, 1. In inculcating important moral leſſons; and 2. In delivering uſeful preſages and monitions concerning future conduct, with an almoſt oracular prudence and authority.

SIC PRISCAE — — — ARTI.

What hath chiefly miſlead the Critics in their explanation of this place, I ſuſpect to have been the frequent encomiums on the ſeverity of the antient muſic, by the Greek and Latin writers. Though here they ſeem to have overlooked two very material conſiderations: 1. That the *former* have chiefly treated the ſubject in a *moral* or *political* view, and therefore preferred the ancient muſic only as it was conceived to influence the public manners. For this reaſon Plato, one of the chief of thoſe *encomiaſts*, applauds, as we find, the practice of Ægypt, in ſuffering no change of her poetry, but continuing, to his time, her fondneſs for the *Songs of Iſis* [De Leg. l. ii. ſub. init.] which juſt as much infers the perfection of thoſe ſongs, conſidered in a critical view, as Rome's ſticking to her *Saliar verſes* would have ſhewn thoſe poor, obſcure oriſons to have exceeded the regular odes and artificial compoſitions of Horace. And it was this kind of criticiſm

criticiſm which, as I ſuppoſe, the poet intended to expoſe in the famous verſes, which I explain in note on ℣ 202. 2. That the *latter*, the principal of them at leaſt, who talk in the ſame ſtrain, lived under the Emperors; in whoſe time, indeed, muſic had undergone a miſerable proſtitution, *being broken*, as one of the beſt of thoſe writers complains, *into an effeminate and impure delicacy—In ſcenis effeminata et impudicis modis fracta*, [Quint. 1. l. x.] As to the times in queſtion, I know but of one paſſage, which clearly and expreſly condemns the muſic then in vogue; and that will admit of ſome alleviation from its being found in a treatiſe concerning laws. The paſſage I mean is in Cicero, [De Leg. l. ii. 15.] who, following Plato in his high-flown principles of legiſlation, exclames, *Illa quæ ſolebant quondam compleri ſeveritate jucunda Livianis et Nævianis modis; nunc ut eadem exultent, cervices oculoſque pariter cum* MODORUM FLEXIONIBUS *torqueant!* For the *ſeveritas jucunda* of the muſic, to which Livius's plays were ſet, it may be tolerably gueſſed from hence, that he was the *firſt* who brought a written Play upon the ſtage; *i. e.* the firſt writer, whoſe plays were acted to a regular and precompoſed muſic. And it is not, we know, very uſual for the firſt eſſays in any art to be perfect. It ſhould ſeem then, that the *flexiones modorum*, as oppoſed to the

the plainneſs of the old muſic, are here condemned, not ſo much in the view of a critic, eſtimating the true ſtate of the ſtage; but, as was hinted, of a legiſlator, treading in the ſteps of Plato. Though indeed I have no doubt, that the muſic in thoſe times was much changed, and had even ſuffered ſome degree of corruption. This I infer, not ſo much from any expreſs authorities that have occurred, as from the general ſtate of thoſe times, which were degenerating apace into the worſt morals, the ſure forerunners of a corrupt and vitiated muſic; for, though it may indeed, in its turn, and doubtleſs does, when eſtabliſhed, contribute much to help on the public depravity, yet that depravity itſelf is originally not the *effect*, but the *cauſe* of a bad muſic; as is more than hinted to be Cicero's real opinion in the place referred to, where, obſerving that the manners of many Greek ſtates had kept pace with their muſic, he adds, that they had undergone this change, *Aut hac dulcedine corruptelaque depravati, ut quidam putant; aut cum ſeveritas eorum ob alia vitia cecidiſſet, tum fuit in auribus animiſque mutatis etiam huic mutationi locus.* [Leg. ii. 15.] But be this as it will, Horace, as we have ſeen, is no way concerned in the diſpute about the antient muſic.

219. SENTENTIA DELPHIS.] *Sententia* is properly *an aphoriſm taken from life, briefly repreſenting either what is, or what ought to be the conduct of it: Oratio ſumpta de vita, quæ aut quid ſit, aut quid eſſe oporteat, in vita, breviter oſtendit.* [Ad Herenn. Rhet. l. iv.] Theſe aphoriſms are here mentioned, as conſtituting the peculiar praiſe and beauty of the chorus. This is finely obſerved, and was intended to convey an oblique cenſure on the practice of thoſe poets, who ſtuff out every part of the drama alike with moral ſentences, not conſidering, that the only proper receptacle of them is the chorus, where indeed they have an extreme propriety; it being the peculiar office and character of the chorus to moralize. In the courſe of the action they ſhould rarely be uſed; and that for the plain reaſon aſſigned by the author, juſt quoted, [for the rule holds on the ſtage, as well as at the bar] *Ut rei actores, non vivendi præceptores, eſſe videamur.* That there was ſome ground for this reproof of the Roman drama, is collected from the few remaining fragments of the old Latin plays, which have much of this ſententious caſt, and from what Quintilian expreſly tells us of the old Latin poets, whoſe fame, it ſeems, was principally raiſed upon this merit. *Tragœdiæ ſcriptores, Accius et Pacuvius, clariſſimi gravitate ſententiarum,*

*ſententiarum*, &c. [l. x. c. 1.] To how intolerable an extreme this humour of moralizing in plays was afterwards carried, Seneca has given us an example.

But here a queſtion will be ſtarted, "Why "then did the Greeks moralize ſo much, or, if "we condemn *Accius* and *Seneca*, how ſhall we "defend *Sophocles* and *Euripides*?" An ingenious [*b*] modern hath taken ſome pains to ſatisfy this difficulty, and in part, I think, hath ſucceeded. His ſolution, in brief, is, "That the "moral and political aphoriſms of the Greek "ſtage generally contained ſome apt and in-"tereſting alluſion to the ſtate of public affairs, "which was eaſily catched by a quick, intel-"ligent auditory; and not a dry, affected moral, "without further meaning, as for the moſt part "was that of the Latins." This account is not a little confirmed by particular inſtances of ſuch acknowledged alluſions, as well as from reflections on the genius and government of the Athenians, at large. But this, though it goes ſome way, does not fully extricate the matter. The truth is, theſe ſentences are too thick ſown in the Greek writers, to be fully accounted for from the ſingle conſideration of their demo-

[*b*] P. Brumoy, Diſc. ſur le parall. des Theat. p. 165. Amſt. 1732.

cratical

cratical views. Not to obſerve, that the very choice of this *medium* for the conveyance of their political applications, preſuppoſes the prior acknowledged uſe and authority of it. I would then account for it in the following manner.

I. In the virtuous ſimplicity of leſs poliſhed times, this ſpirit of moralizing is very prevalent; the good ſenſe of ſuch people always delighting to ſhew itſelf in ſententious or proverbial γνῶμαι, or obſervations. Their character, like that of the clown in Shakeſpear, is *to be very ſwift and ſententious.* [As you like it, Act v. ſc. 1.] This is obvious to common experience, and was long ſince obſerved by the *philoſopher*, οἱ ἄγροικοι μάλιϛα γνωμοτύποι εἰσὶ, ϗ ῥᾳδίως ἀποφαίνονται, [Ariſt. Rhet. l. ii. c. 21.] an obſervation, which of itſelf accounts for the practice of the elder poets in Greece, as in all other nations. A cuſtom, thus introduced, is not eaſily laid aſide, eſpecially when the oracular caſt of theſe ſentences, ſo fitted to *ſtrike*, and the moral views of writers themſelves (which was more particularly true of the old dramatiſts) concurred to favour this taſte. But, 2. there was added to this, more eſpecially in the age of Sophocles and Euripides, a general prevailing fondneſs for moral wiſdom, which ſeems to have made the faſhionable ſtudy of men of all ranks in thoſe days; when ſchools of philoſophy were

reſorted to for recreation as well as inſtruction, and a knowledge in morals was the ſupreme accompliſhment in vogue: The fruit of theſe philoſophical conferences would naturally ſhew itſelf in certain brief, ſententious concluſions, which would neither contradict the faſhion, nor, it ſeems, offend againſt the eaſe and gaiety of converſation in thoſe times. *Schools* and *pedantry*, *morals* and *auſterity*, were not ſo eſſentially connected, in their combinations of ideas, as they have been ſince; and a ſenſible moral truth might have fallen from any mouth, without diſgracing it. Nay, which is very remarkable, the very *ſcholia*, as they were called, or drinking catches of the Greeks, were ſeaſoned with this moral turn; the ſallies of pleaſantry, which eſcaped them in their freeſt hours, being tempered for the moſt part, by ſome ſtrokes of this national ſobriety. "During the courſe of "their entertainments, ſays Athenæus, [l. xv. "c. 14.] they loved to hear, from ſome wiſe and "prudent perſon, an agreeable ſong: and thoſe "ſongs were held by them moſt agreeable, "which contained exhortations to virtue, or "other inſtructions relative to their conduct "in life."

And to give the reader a taſte of theſe *moral* ſongs, I will take leave to preſent him with a very fine one, written by no leſs a perſon than Ariſtotle

Ariſtotle himſelf; and the rather, as I have it in my power to preſent him, at the ſame time, with an elegant tranſlation of it. But its beſt recommendation will be that it comes from the ſame hand which has ſo agreeably entertained us of late with ſome ſpirited imitations of Horace [*i*].

> Ἀρετὰ πολύμοχθε γένει βροτείῳ,
> Θήραμα κάλλιστον βίῳ.
> Σᾶς πέρι, Παρθένε, μορφᾶς
> Καὶ θανεῖν ζηλωτὸς ἐν Ἑλλάδι πότμος,
> Καὶ πόνους τλῆναι μαλεροὺς ἀκάμαντας.
> Τοῖον ἐπὶ φρένα βάλλεις καρπὸν εἰς ἀθάνατον,
> Χρυσοῦ τε κρέσσω καὶ γονέων,
> Μαλακαυγητοῖό θ᾽ ὕπνου.
> Σοῦ δ᾽ ἕνεκ᾽ ἐκ Διὸς Ἡρακλέης
> Λήδας τε κοῦροι πόλλ᾽ ἀνέτλασαν,
> Ἔργοις σὰν ἀγορεύοντες δύναμιν.
> Σοῖς τε πόθοις Ἀχιλλεὺς
> Αἴας τ᾽ αἴδαο δόμους ἦλθον·
> Σᾶς δ᾽ ἕνεκα φιλίου μορφᾶς
> Ἀταρνέως ἔντροφος
> Ἀελίου χήρωσεν αὐγάς.
> Τοίγαρ ἀοίδιμον ἔργοις,

[*k*] *Imitations of Horace* by Thomas Nevile, M. A. Fellow of Jeſus College, Cambridge, 1758.

Ἀθάνατόν τε μιν αὐξήσουσι μοῦσαι,
Μναμοσύνας θύγατρες,
Διὸς ξενίου σέβας αὔξουσαι
Φιλίας τε γέρας βεβαίου [*l*].

[*l*] There is a conſiderable difference in the copies of this ode, as given us in the beſt editions of Athenæus and Diogenes Laertius. But the SIXTH verſe is, in all of them, ſo inexplicable, in reſpect of the *meaſure*, the *conſtruction*, and the *ſenſe*, that I have no doubt of its being extremely corrupt. In ſuch a caſe one may be indulged in making conjectures. And the following one, by a learned perſon, exactly ſkilled in the proprieties as well as elegancies of the Greek language, is ſo reaſonable, that I had almoſt ventured to give it a place in the text.

The Poet had been celebrating ỳ 3. the divine *form* of virtue; which inſpired the Grecian youth with an invincible courage and contempt of danger. It was natural therefore to conclude his panegyric with ſome ſuch Epiphonema as this: "Such a paſſion "do'ſt thou kindle up in the minds of men!"

To juſtify this paſſion, he next turns to the *fruits*, or advantages which virtue yields; which, he tells us, are more excellent than thoſe we receive from any other poſſeſſion, whether of *wealth*, *nobility*, or *eaſe*, the three great idols of mankind. Something like this we collect from the obſcure glimmerings of ſenſe that occur to us from the common reading,

Τοῖον ἐπὶ φρένα βάλλεις καρπὸν τ' εἰς ἀθάνατον,
Χρυσοῦ τε κρείσσω, etc.

But it is plain, then, that a very material word muſt have dropt out of the *firſt* part of the line, and that

I. Hail,

I.

Hail, Virtue! Goddeſs! ſov'reign Good,
By man's bold race with pain purſu'd!
Where'er thou dart'ſt thy radiant eye,
Greece ſees her ſons with tranſport fly;
Danger before thee diſappears,
And death's dark frown no terror wears.

II.

So full into the breaſt of man deſcends
Thy rich ambroſial ſhow'r;
A ſhow'r, that gold, that parents far tranſcends,
Or, ſleep's ſoft-ſoothing pow'r.

III.

By thee ALCIDES ſoar'd to fame,
Thy influence LEDA's twins proclaim;

there is an evident corruption in the *laſt*. In a word, the whole paſſage may be reformed thus,

Τοῖον ἐπὶ φρέν' ἜΡΩΤΑ βάλλεις.
Καρπὸν ΦΕΡΕΙΣ ἀθάνατον
Κρυσοῦ τε κρέσσω καὶ γονέων,
Μαλακαυγήτοιό θ' ὕπνου.

It need not be obſerved how eaſily καρπὸν ΤΕΕΙΣ is changed into καρπὸν ΦΕΡΕΙΣ: And as to the reſtored word ἔρωτα, beſides the neceſſity of it to complete the ſenſe, it exactly ſuits with σοῖς τε πόθοις in ℣ 12. Laſtly, the *meaſure* will now ſufficiently juſtify itſelf to the learned reader.

 Heroes

Heroes for thee have dauntleſs trod
The dreary paths of hell's abode;
Fir'd by thy form, all beamy bright,
Atarneus' nurſling left the light.

IV.

His deeds, his ſocial love (ſo will the nine,
Proud to ſpread wide the praiſe
Of friendſhip and of friendly Jove) ſhall ſhine
With ever-living rays.

This moralizing humour, ſo prevalent in thoſe times, is, I dare be confident, the true ſource of the ſententious caſt of the Greek dramatic writers, as well as of that ſober air of moral, which, to the no ſmall diſguſt of modern writers, is ſpread over all their poets. Not but there would be ſome difference in thoſe poets themſelves, and in proportion as they had been more or leſs converſant in the Academy, would be their reliſh of this moral mode; as is clearly ſeen in the caſe of Euripides, that philoſopher of the ſtage, as the Athenians called him, and who is characterized by Quinctilian, as *ſententiis denſus, et in iis, quæ a ſapientibus tradita ſunt, pæne ipſis par*. [L. x. c. 1.] Yet ſtill the faſhion was ſo general, that no commerce of the world could avoid, or wholly get clear of it; and therefore Sophocles, though his engagements in the ſtate

kept

kept him at a greater diſtance from the ſchools, had yet his ſhare of this philoſophical humour. Now this apology for the practice of the Greek poets doth by no means extend to the Roman; Philoſophy having been very late, and never generally, the taſte of Rome.

Cicero ſays, *Philoſophia quidem tantum abeſt ut proinde, ac de hominum eſt vitâ merita, laudetur, ut a pleriſque neglecta, a multis etiam vituperetur.* In another place he tells us, that in his time Ariſtotle was not much known, or read, even by the philoſophers themſelves. [*Cic. Top. ſub init.*]

And, though in the age of Seneca, *Sentences*, we know, were much in uſe, yet the caſt and turn of them evidently ſhew them to have been the affectation of the lettered *few*, and not the *general* mode and practice of the time. For the quaintneſs, in which Seneca's aphoriſms are dreſſed, manifeſtly ſpeaks the labour and artifice of the cloſet, and is juſt the reverſe of that eaſy, ſimple expreſſion, which cloaths them in the Greek poets, thus demonſtrating their familiar currency in common life. Under any other circumſtances than theſe, the practice, as was obſerved, muſt be unqueſtionably faulty; except only in the chorus, where, for the reaſon before given, it may always, with good advantage, be employed.

220. Carmine qui tragico, etc.] The connexion with ℣ 201, from whence the poet had digreſſed, is worth obſerving. The digreſſion had been taken up in deſcribing the improved ſtate of dramatic muſic; the application of which to the caſe of tragedy, brings him round again to his ſubject, the tragic chorus; to which alone, as hath been obſerved, the two laſt lines refer. This too is the fineſt preparation of what follows. For to have paſſed on directly from the *tibia* to the *ſatyrs*, had been abrupt and inartificial; but from *tragedy*, the tranſition is eaſy, the *ſatyrs* being a ſpecies of the tragic drama. That it was ſo accounted may be ſeen from the following paſſage in Ovid,

*Eſt et in obſcœnos deflexa tragœdia riſus,*
*Multaque præteriti verba pudoris habet.*
Triſt. l. ii. ℣ 409.

For the *tragedy*, here referred to, cannot be the regular Roman tragedy. *That* he had diſtinctly conſidered before, and, beſides, it in no age admitted, much leſs in this, of which we are ſpeaking, ſo intolerable a mixture. As little can it be underſtood of the proper Atellane fable, for beſides that Ovid is here conſidering the *Greek* drama only, the Atellane was ever regarded as a ſpecies, not of tragedy, but comedy: The authority of Donatus is very expreſs; "*Comœ-*

"*diarum* formæ ſunt tres: Palliatæ, Togatæ, "*Atellanæ*, ſalibus et jocis compoſitæ, quæ in ſe "non habent niſi vetuſtam elegantiam." [Prol. in Terent.] And Athenæus [l. vi.] ſpeaking of ſome pieces of this ſort, which L. Sylla had compoſed, calls them ςαλυρικὰς κωμῳδίας, ſatyric comedies; *comedies*, becauſe, as Donatus ſays, "ſalibus et jocis compoſitæ:" and *ſatyric*, not that ſatyrs were introduced in them, but, according to Diomedes, from their being "argumentis "dictiſque *ſimiles* ſatyricis fabulis Græcis." Of what then can Ovid be underſtood to ſpeak, but the true ſatyric piece, which was always eſteemed, and, as appears from the Cyclops, in fact is, what Demetrius [περὶ ἑρμηνείας] elegantly calls it, τραγῳδία παιζᾶσα, a lighter kind of *tragedy*; the very name, which Horace, as well as Ovid in this place, gives to it? But this is further clear from the inſtance quoted by Ovid, of this looſe tragedy; for he proceeds:

*Nec nocet autori, mollem qui fecit Achillem,*
*Infregiſſe ſuis fortia facta modis.*

which well agrees to the idea of a ſatyric piece, and, as Voſſius takes notice, ſeems to be the very ſame ſubject, which Athenæus and others tell us, Sophocles had work'd into a ſatyric tragedy, under the title of Ἀχιλλέως ἐραςαί.

221. Mox etiam, etc.] It is not the intention of theſe notes to retail the accounts of others. I muſt therefore refer the reader, for whatever concerns the hiſtory of the ſatyric, as I have hitherto done, of the tragic, and comic drama, to the numerous diſſertators on the ancient ſtage; and above all in the caſe before us, to the learned Caſaubon; from whom all that hath been ſaid to any purpoſe, by modern writers, hath been taken. Only it will be proper to obſerve one or two particulars, which have been greatly miſunderſtood, and without which it will be impoſſible, in any tolerable manner, to explain what follows.

I. The deſign of the poet, in theſe lines, is not to fix the origin of the ſatyric piece, in aſcribing the invention of it to Theſpis. This hath been concluded, without the leaſt warrant from his own words, which barely tell us, "that the Repreſentation of tragedy was in elder "Greece, followed by the *ſatyrs*;" and indeed the nature of the thing, as well as the teſtimony of all antiquity, ſhews it to be impoſſible. For the *ſatyr* here ſpoken of, is, in all reſpects, a regular drama, and therefore could not be of earlier date, than the times of Æſchylus, when the conſtitution of the drama was firſt formed. 'Tis true indeed, there was a kind of entertainment of much greater antiquity, which by the antients

antients is ſometimes called *ſatyric*, out of which (as Ariſtotle aſſures us) tragedy itſelf aroſe, ἡ δὲ τραγῳδία, διὰ τὸ ἐκ σατυρικοῦ μεταβαλεῖν, ὀψὲ ἀπεσεμνώθη, [περ. ποιητ. κ. δ.] But then this was nothing but a chorus of ſatyrs [Athenæus, l. xiv.] celebrating the feſtivals of *Bacchus*, with rude ſongs, and uncouth dances; and had little reſemblance to that, which was afterwards called *ſatyric*; which, except that it retained the chorus of ſatyrs, and turned upon ſome ſubject relative to Bacchus, was of a quite different ſtructure, and, in every reſpect, as regular a compoſition, as tragedy itſelf.

II. There is no doubt but the poem, here diſtinguiſhed by the name of SATYRI, was in actual uſe on the Roman ſtage. This appears from the turn of the poet's whole criticiſm upon it. Particularly, his addreſs to the Piſos, ℣ 235. and his obſervation of the offence which a looſe dialogue in this drama would give to a *Roman* auditory, ℣ 248. make it evident that he had, in fact, the practice of his own ſtage in view. It hath, however, been queſtioned, whether by *Satyri* we are to underſtand the proper Greek *Satyrs*, or the Latin *Atellane* fable, which, in the main of its character, very much reſembled that drama. If the authority of Diomedes be any thing, the *former* muſt be the truth, for he ex-

preſly

preſſy aſſerts, "that the Satyric and Atellane "pieces, though ſimilar in the general caſt of "their compoſition, differed in this eſſential "point, that the perſons in the former were "ſatyrs, in the other, not." [L. iii. c. De poëm. gen.] Now the poet expreſly tells us the Perſons in the drama he is here deſcribing, were *Satyrs*, and accordingly delivers rules for the regulation of their characters. As to the *Atellane*, according to the way in which Voſſius reads the words of Diomedes, the characters were *Oſcan*, *perſonæ Oſcæ*, which is very probable, not ſo much for the reaſons aſſign'd by this Critic (for they are indeed very frivolous) but becauſe, as it ſhould ſeem from a paſſage in Strabo, [Lib. v. 233.] the language of the Osci was uſed in theſe Atellanes, and therefore common ſenſe would require, that the perſons alſo introduced ſhould be Oſcan. The difficulty is to know how it happened that, in a work written purpoſely to reform the Roman ſtage, the poet ſhould ſay nothing of one ſpecies, the *Atellane*, which was of great authority and conſtant uſe at Rome, and yet ſay ſo much of another, the *Satyrs*, which was properly a Greek entertainment and certainly much leſs cultivated by the Roman poets. The plain ſolution of the matter, is, that, when now the Romans were become acquainted with the Greek models, and had

had applied themſelves to the imitation of them, theſe Oſcan characters were exchanged for the Greek ſatyrs, which they before reſembled in the main parts of their character; and which appear, on other occaſions, to have been no ſtrangers at Rome; as we collect from the Sileni and Satyrs making a part (as Dionyſius relates it) in their triumphal proceſſions. So that this change of the Oſcan perſons for *Satyrs* is to be conſidered only as an improvement of the old *Atellane*, and not the introduction of an intirely new drama. In every other reſpect the precepts here given for the regulation of the *Satyrs* are ſuch as would equally ſerve to improve the *Atellane*. The probable reaſon why the poet choſe to inſiſt ſo much on this alteration, or rather why he laboured ſo ſtrenuouſly to *ſupport* it, will be given in its place. In the mean time ſuppoſing his view to have been this of countenancing the introduction of *ſatyric perſons* into the Atellane (and that they were, in fact, introduced, we learn from an expreſs authority [m]) every thing ſaid on the ſubject will not only be pertinent and agreeable to what is here taught to be the general tenor of the epiſtle, but will be ſeen to have an addreſs and contrivance,

[m] *Agite, fugite, quatite, Satyri:* A verſe cited from one of theſe Latin ſatyrs by Marius Victorinus.

which

which will very much illuſtrate this whole part, and recommend it to the exact reader.

But before I quit this ſubject of the Atellane fable it will be proper to obſerve, That when I every where ſpeak of it, as of early original, and antient uſe on the Roman ſtage, I am not unmindful that Velleius Paterculus ſpeaks of Pomponius as the Inventor of this Poem; which, if taken in the ſtrict ſenſe, will bring the date of it very low. "Sane non ignoremus eâdem "ætate fuiſſe Pomponium, ſenſibus celebrem, "verbis rudem, et *novitate inventi a ſe operis* com-"mendabilem." L. ii. c. ix. For the age he is ſpeaking of is that of SYLLA. But the authorities for the high antiquity of the Atellane fable are ſo expreſs, that, when Pomponius is called the *Inventor* of it, it is but as Horace calls Lucilius the Inventor of the Roman Satire. That is, he made ſo conſiderable a change in the form and conduct of this poem, as to run away with all the honour of it. The improvements made by Lucilius in Satire have been taken notice of in the *Introduction*. And it happens that a curious paſſage in Athenæus will let us into the Improvements made by Pomponius in the Atellanes.

But firſt we are to underſtand that this ſort of entertainment, as the name ſpeaks, was imported to Rome from ATELLA, a town of the

OSCI

Osci in Campania; and that the Dialect of that people was conſtantly and *only* uſed in it, even when the Oſci themſelves had ceaſed to be a people. This we learn from Strabo. ΟΣΚΩΝ ἐκλελοιπότων, ἡ διάλεκτος μένει παρὰ τοῖς Ρωμαίοις· ὥστε καὶ ποιήματα σκηνοβατεῖσθαι κατά τινα ἀγῶνα πάτριον καὶ μιμολογεῖσθαι. L. v. 233.

The Oscan language, we ſee, was made uſe of in the Atellane plays, juſt as the Welſh, or ſome Provincial Dialect, is often employed in our Comedies.

But now we learn from Athenæus that L. Sylla writ ſome of theſe Atellanes in the Roman language. ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γραφεῖσαι σατυρικαὶ κωμῳδίαι ΤΗΙ ΠΑΤΡΩΩΙ ΦΩΝΗΙ. [L. vi. p. 261. Ed. Caſaub.] The difficulty then clears up. For the Pomponius whom Velleius ſpeaks of was contemporary with L. Sylla. So that to give any propriety to the term of *Inventor*, as applied to Pomponius, we muſt conclude that he was the *firſt* perſon who ſet this example of compoſing Atellane plays in the vulgar dialect: which took ſo much that he was even followed in this practice by the Roman General. This account of the matter perfectly ſuits with the encomium given to Pomponius. He would naturally, on ſuch an alteration, endeavour to give this buffoon ſort of Comedy a more rational

caſt:

caſt: And this reform of itſelf would entitle him to great honour. Hence the SENSIBUS CELEBRIS of Paterculus [n]. But to preſerve ſome ſort of reſemblance (which the people would look for) to the old Atellane, and not to ſtrip it of all the pleaſantry ariſing from the barbarous dialect, he affected, it ſeems, the *antique* in the turn of his expreſſion. Hence the other part of his character (which in the politer age of Paterculus grew offenſive to nice judges) VERBIS RUDIS.

The concluſion is, That the Atellane Fable was in its firſt rude form and Oſcan Dialect of antient uſe at Rome, where it was admitted, as Strabo ſpeaks, ΚΑΤΑ ΤΙΝΑ ΑΓΩΝΑ ΠΑΤΡΙΟΝ: That Pomponius afterwards *reformed* its barbarities, and brought it on the Stage in a *Roman* dreſs; which together were thought ſo

[n] This, I think, muſt be the interpretation of *ſenſibus celebrem*, ſuppoſing it to be the true reading. But a learned critic has ſhewn with great appearance of reaſon, that the text is corrupt and ſhould be reformed into *ſenſibus* CELEREM. According to which reading the encomium here paſt on Pomponius muſt be underſtood of his *Wit*, and not the gravity of his moral Sentences. Either way his title to the honour of Invention is juſt the ſame.—See a Specimen of a new Edition of Paterculus in BIBLIOTHEQUE BRITANNIQUE, *Juillet*, &c. 1736.

great

great improvements, that later writers ſpeak of him as the INVENTOR of this Poem. But to return to our proper ſubject, the *Greek Satyrs*.

III. For the abſolute merit of theſe ſatyrs, the reader will judge of it himſelf by comparing the Cyclops, the only piece of this kind remaining to us from antiquity, with the rules here delivered by Horace. Only it may be obſerved, in addition to what the reader will find elſewhere [*n.* ✝ 223.] apologized in its favour, that the double character of the ſatyrs admirably fitted it, as well for a ſenſible entertainment to the wiſe, as for the ſport and diverſion of the vulgar. For while the groteſque appearance, and jeſting vein of theſe fantaſtic perſonages amuſed the one; the other ſaw much further; and conſidered them, at the ſame time, as replete with ſcience, and informed by a ſpirit of the moſt abſtruſe wiſdom. Hence important leſſons of civil prudence, intereſting alluſions to public affairs, or a high, refined moral, might, with the higheſt probability, be inſinuated, under the ſlight cover of a ruſtic ſimplicity. And, from this inſtructive caſt, which from its nature muſt be very obſcure, if not impenetrable, to us at this day, was, I doubt not, derived the principal pleaſure which the antients found in this ſpecies of the drama. If the modern reader would conceive any thing of the nature and degree

degree of this pleaſure, he may in part gueſs at it, from reflecting on the entertainment he himſelf receives from the characters of the clowns in Shakeſpear; *who*, as the poet himſelf hath characterized them, *uſe their folly, like a ſtalking horſe, and, under the preſentation of that, ſhoot their wit.* [As you like it.]

221. AGRESTIS SATYROS, etc.] It hath been ſhewn, that the poet could not intend, in theſe lines, to *fix the origin of the ſatyric drama.* But, though this be certain, and the diſpute concerning that point be thereby determined, yet is it to be noted, that he purpoſely deſcribes the ſatyr in its ruder and leſs poliſhed form; glancing even at ſome barbarities, which deform the Bacchic chorus; which was properly the ſatyric piece, before Æſchylus had, by his regular conſtitution of the drama, introduced it, under a very different form on the ſtage. The reaſon of this conduct is given in *n.* on ℣ 203. Hence the propriety of the word *nudavit*, which Lambin rightly interprets, *nudos introduxit Satyros*, the poet hereby expreſſing the monſtrous indecorum of this entertainment in its firſt unimproved ſtate. Alluding alſo to this ancient character of the *Satyr*, he calls him *aſper*, i. e. rude and petulant; and even adds, that his jeſts were intemperate, and without the *leaſt mixture*

*of*

*of gravity.* For thus, I upon the authority of a very ingenious and learned critic, I explane *incolumi gravitate*, i. e. rejecting every thing ſerious, bidding *farewell*, as we ſay, *to all gravity*. Thus [L. iii. O. 5.]

*Incolumi Jove et urbe Roma:*

*i. e.* bidding farewell to Jupiter [Capitolinus] and Rome; agreeably to what is ſaid juſt before,

*Anciliorum et nominis et togæ*
OBLITUS, *æternæque Veſtæ.*

or, as SALVUS is uſed ſtill more remarkably in Martial [10. l. v.]

*Ennius eſt lectus* SALVO *tibi, Roma, Marone;*
*Et ſua riſerunt ſecula Mæonidem.*

*Farewell, all gravity*, is as remote from the original ſenſe of the words *fare well*, as *incolumi gravitate* from that of *incolumis*, or *ſalvo Marone* from that of *ſalvus*.

223. INLECEBRIS ERAT ET GRATA NOVITATE MORANDUS SPECTATOR—]. The poet gives us in theſe words the reaſon, why ſuch groſs Ribaldry, as we know the Atellanes conſiſted of, was endured by the politeſt age of Rome. Scenical repreſentations, being then intended, not, as in our days, for the entertainment of the better ſort, but on certain great ſo-

lemnities, indifferently for the diverſion of the whole city, it became neceſſary to conſult the taſte of the multitude, as well as of thoſe, *quibus eſt equus, et pater et res.*

And this reaſon is ſurely ſufficient to vindicate the poet from the cenſure of a late critic, who has fallen upon this part of the epiſtle with no mercy. "The poet, ſays he, ſpends a great num-"ber of verſes about theſe ſatyrs; but the ſub-"ject itſelf is unworthy his pen. He, who could "not bear the elegant mimes of Laberius, that "he ſhould think this farcical and obſcene traſh, "worth his peculiar notice, is ſomewhat "ſtrange." I doubt not, it appeared ſo to this writer, who neither conſidered the peculiar neceſſity of the ſatyric piece, nor attended to the poet's purpoſe and drift in this epiſtle. The former is the more extraordinary, becauſe he hath told us, and rightly too, "that, to content "the people, the ſatyric was ſuperadded to the "tragic drama." And he quotes a paſſage from Diomedes, which gives the ſame account, *Satyros induxerunt ludendi cauſa jocandique, ſimul ut ſpectator inter res tragicas ſeriaſque ſatyrorum quoque jocis et ludis delectaretur.* Should not this have taught him, that what was ſo requiſite to content the people, might deſerve ſome notice from the poet? This *farcical traſh* was chiefly calculated for thoſe, who without the *enticement of*

*ſo agreeable a change* in the entertainment of the day, would not have had patience to ſit out the tragedy; which being intended for the gratification of the better ſort, *urbani et honeſti*, they, in their turn, required to be diverted in the only way, which was to the level of their taſte; that of farce and pleaſantry. And this I dare be confident, ſo great a patron of liberty, as this writer, will agree with me in thinking to be but reaſonable in a free ſtate; which ought to make ſome proviſion for the *few*, that may chance, even under ſuch advantages, to want a truly critical ſpirit. I hold then, that Horace acted, not only in the character of a good critic, but of a prudent man, and good citizen, in attempting to refine, what it had not been equitable, or was not in his power, wholly to remove. But 2. the learned critic as little attended to the drift of the epiſtle, as to the important uſe and neceſſity of the ſatyric drama. He muſt otherwiſe have ſeen, that, in an eſſay to improve and regulate the Roman theatre (which is the ſole purpoſe of it) the poet's buſineſs was to take it, as it then ſtood, and to confine himſelf to ſuch defects and abuſes, as he found moſt likely to admit a correction, and not, as viſionary projectors uſe, to propoſe a thorough reform of the public taſte in every inſtance. The *Atellanes* had actual poſſeſſion of the ſtage, and, from their anti-

quity, and other prejudices in their favour, as well as from the very deſign and end of their theatrical entertainments, would be ſure to keep it. What had the poet then, in theſe circumſtances, to do, but, in purſuance of his main deſign, to encourage a reformation of that entertainment, which he was not at liberty abſolutely, and under every ſhape, to reject. This he judged might moſt conveniently be done by adopting the Greek *Satyrs* inſtead of their own *Oſcan* characters. With this change, though the Atellanes might not, perhaps, be altogether to his own taſte, yet he hoped to render it a tolerable entertainment to the better ſort. And this, in fact, it might have been by following the directions here given; part of which were intended to free it from that *obſcene and farcical traſh*, which appears to have been no leſs offenſive to the poet, than to this critic.

As for the ſo much applauded *mimes*, they had not, it is probable, at this time gained a footing on the ſtage, ſufficient to entitle them to ſo much conſideration. This was a new upſtart ſpecies of the drama, which, though it had the common good-fortune of abſurd novelties, to take with the great; yet was generally diſapproved by men of better taſte, and better morals. Cicero had paſſed a ſevere cenſure upon it in one of his epiſtles, [Ad famil. ix. 16.] which

intimates,

intimates, that it was of a more buffoon and ridiculous compoſition, than their Atellanes; whoſe place it began to be the faſhion to ſupply with this ribaldry. And we collect the ſame thing from what Ovid obſerves of it in apology for the looſeneſs of his own verſes,

> *Quid ſi ſcripſiſſem* MIMOS *obſcœna jocantes,*
> *Qui ſemper vetiti crimen amoris habent?*
>
> \- - - - - - - - - -
>
> *Nec ſatis inceſtis temerari vocibus* aures,
> *Aſſueſcunt* oculi *multa pudenda pati,*
>
> Triſt. l. ii. ℣ 497.

Horace, with this writer's leave, might therefore judge it better to retain the Atellanes under ſome reſtrictions, than adopt what was much worſe. But the mimes of Laberius were quite another thing. They were all elegance. So J. Scaliger [Comment. de Comœd. and Tragœd. c. vi.] and, after him, this writer, tells us; but on no better grounds, than that he wrote good Latin (though not always that, as may be ſeen in A. Gellius, l. xvi. c. 7.) and hath left a few elegant, moral ſcraps behind him. But what then? the kind of compoſition was ridiculous and abſurd, and, in every view, far leſs tolerable, than the *ſatyrs* under the regulation of Horace. The latter was a regular drama, conſiſting of an intire fable, conducted

 according

according to the rules of probability and good ſenſe, only daſhed with a little extravagance for the ſake of the mob. The character of the former hath been given above from unqueſtionable authorities. Accordingly Diomedes [iii: p. 488. ed. Putſch.] defines it to be *an irreverent and laſcivious imitation of obſcene acts—mimus eſt ſermonis cujuſlibet motus ſine reverentia, vel factorum et turpium cum laſcivia imitatio.* And Scaliger himſelf owns *veri mimi proprium eſſe quædam ſordida ut affectet*, loc. cit. It ſeems, in ſhort, to have been a confuſed medley of comic drollery on a variety of ſubjects, without any conſiſtent order or deſign; delivered by one actor, and heightened with all the licence of obſcene geſticulation. Its beſt character, as practiſed by its greateſt maſter, Laberius, was that of being witty in a very bad way [Sen. Controv. l. iii. c. 18.] and its ſole end and boaſt, *riſu diducere rictum* [Hor. i. S. x. 7.] which, whatever virtue it may be, is not always a proof of much elegance. But I have ſpent too many words on a criticiſm, which the ingenious author, I am perſuaded, let fall unawares, and did not mean to give us as the reſult of a mature and well-weighed deliberation on this ſubject.

225. VE-

225. VERUM ITA RISORES, etc.] The connecting particle, *verum*, expreſſes the oppoſition intended between the original ſatyr and that which the poet approves. For having inſinuated the propriety of the ſatyric ſhews, as well from the practice of Greece, as the nature of feſtival ſolemnities, the poet goes on to animadvert on their defects, and to preſcribe ſuch rules, in the conduct of them, as might render them a tolerable diverſion, even to the better ſort. This introduction of the ſubject hath no ſmall art. For, there being at this time (as hath been ſhewn) an attempt to bring in the Greek ſatyrs, while the Atellane plays (as was likely) ſtill held the affections of the people, the poet was not openly to reproach and diſcredit theſe; but, by a tacit preference, to ſupport and juſtify the other. This is done with addreſs. For, inſtead of criticiſing the Atellanes, which came directly in his way, after having cloſed his account of the Roman tragedy, he relates, as it were, incidentally, the practice of antient Greece in exhibiting ſatyrs, and thence immediately paſſes on, without ſo much as touching on the other favourite entertainment, to offer ſome directions concerning the ſatyric drama.

227. Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros, etc.] Gods and Heroes were introduced as well into the ſatyric as tragic drama, and often the very ſame Gods and Heroes, which had born a part in the preceding tragedy: a practice, which Horace, I ſuppoſe, intended, by this hint, to recommend as moſt regular. This gave the ſerious, tragic air to the ſatyr. The comic aroſe from the *riſor* and *dicax*, who was either a ſatyr himſelf, or ſome character of an extravagant, ridiculous caſt, like a ſatyr. Of this kind, ſays Diomedes, from whom I take this account, are Autolychus and Burris: which laſt particular I mention for the ſake of juſtifying a correction of the learned Caſaubon. This great critic conjectured, that, inſtead of *Burris*, in this place, it ſhould be read *Buſiris*. His reaſon is "*nam Burris iſte ex Græcorum poetis mihi non notus*:" which reaſon hath more force, than appears at firſt ſight. For the very nature of this diverſion required, that the principal character of it ſhould be well known, which it was ſcarce likely to be, if not taken from a common ſtory in their poets. But Voſſius objects, "*ſed non ea fuerit perſona ridicula*:" contrary to what the grammarian repreſents it. But how ſo? Buſiris was a ſavage, inhoſpitable tyrant, who ſacrificed ſtrangers.

And

And what ſhould hinder this character from being made ridiculous, as well as Polypheme in the Cyclops? Their characters were not unlike. And, as is ſeen in that caſe, the antients knew to ſet forth ſuch monſters of cruelty in a light, that rendered them equally abſurd and deteſtable. This was agreeable to their humanity, which, by ſuch repreſentations, loved to cultivate a ſpirit of benevolence in the ſpectators; and ſhews the moral tendency of even the abſurdeſt of the antient dramatic ſhews. The objection of Voſſius is then of no weight. But what further confirms the emendation of the excellent Caſaubon, is a manuſcript note on the margin of a printed copy of this book [o], which I have now by me, as it ſhould ſeem, from his own hand, "*lectionem vero quam reſtituimus etiam in* "*optimo codice Puteano poſtea invenimus.*" The learned reader will therefore, henceforth, look upon the text of *Diomedes*, in this place, as fully ſettled.

229. MIGRET IN OBSCURAS etc.—AUT, DUM VITAT etc.] The two faults, cautioned againſt, are 1. a too low, or vulgar expreſſion, in the comic parts; and 2. a too ſublime one,

[o] In the library of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

in the tragic. The *former* of theſe faults would almoſt naturally adhere to the firſt eſſays of the Roman ſatyrs, from the buffoon genius of the old Atellane: and the *latter*, from not apprehending the true meaſure and degree of the tragic mixture. To correct both theſe, the poet gives the exacteſt idea of the ſatyrs, in the image of a Roman matron, ſharing in the mirth of a religious feſtival. The occaſion obliged to ſome freedoms; and yet the dignity of her character demanded a decent reſerve.

234. NON EGO INORNATA etc.] The ſcope of theſe lines may be to regulate the ſatyric ſtyle, by the idea of its character, before given, in the alluſion to a Roman matron. Conformably to that idea, a plain, unornamented expreſſion [from ỳ 234 to 236.] muſt not always be uſed. The three following lines inforce this general application by example.

If the exact reader find himſelf diſſatisfied with this gloſs, which ſeems the only one, the words, as they now ſtand, will bear, he may, perhaps, incline to admit the following conjecture, which propoſes to read, inſtead of *inornata*, *honorata*. I. The context, I think, requires this change. For the two faults obſerved above [ỳ 229, 30.] were, 1. a too low expreſſion, and, 2. a too lofty. Correſponding to this double

double charge, the poet having fixed the idea of this ſpecies of compoſition [ỳ 231, 2, 3.] ſhould naturally be led to apply it to both points in queſtion: 1. to the comic part, in preſcribing the true meaſure of its condeſcenſion, and, 2. to the tragic, in ſettling the true bounds of its elevation. And this, according to the reading here offered, the poet doth, only in an inverted order. The ſenſe of the whole would be this,

1. *Non ego* HONORATA *et dominantia nomina ſolum*
*Verbaque, Piſones, ſatyrorum ſcriptor amabo:*

*i. e.* in the tragic ſcenes, I would not confine myſelf to ſuch words only, as are in honour, and bear rule in tragic, and the moſt ſerious ſubjects; this ſtatelineſs not agreeing to the condeſcending levity of the ſatyr.

2. *Nec ſic enitar tragico differre colori,*
*Ut nihil interſit Davuſne loquatur, et audax*
*Pythias, emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,*
*An cuſtos famuluſque Dei Silenus alumni.*

*i. e.* nor, on the contrary, in the comic ſcenes, would I incur the other extreme of a too plain, and vulgar expreſſion, this as little ſuiting its inherent matronlike dignity. But, II. this correction improves the *expreſſion* as well as the *ſenſe*. For beſides the oppoſition, implied in the

the disjunctive, *nec*, which is this way reſtored, *dominantia* hath now its genuine ſenſe; and not that ſtrange and foreign one forced upon it out of the Greek language. As connected with *honorata*, it becomes a metaphor, elegantly purſued; and hath too a ſingular propriety, the poet here ſpeaking of figurative terms. And then, for *honorata* itſelf, it ſeems to have been a familiar mode of expreſſion with Horace. Thus [2 Ep. ii. 112.] *honore indigna vocabula* are ſuch words as have *parum ſplendoris* and are *ſine pondere*. And "*quæ ſunt in honore vocabula*" is ſpoken of the contrary ones, ſuch as are fit to enter into a ſerious tragic compoſition, in this very epiſtle, ℣ 71.

240. Ex noto fictum etc.] This precept [from ℣ 240 to 244] is analogous to that, before given [℣ 129] concerning tragedy. It directs to form the ſatyrs out of a known ſubject. The reaſons are, in general, the ſame for both. Only one ſeems peculiar to the ſatyrs. For the caſt of them being neceſſarily romantic, and the perſons, thoſe fantaſtic beings, called ſatyrs, the τὸ ὅμοιον, or probable, will require the ſubject to have gained a popular belief, without which the repreſentation muſt appear unnatural. Now theſe ſubjects, which have gained a popular belief, in conſequence of old tradition, and their

frequent

frequent celebration in the poets, are what Horace calls *nota*; juſt as newly invented ſubjects, or, which comes to the ſame thing, ſuch as had not been employed by other writers, *indicta*, he, on a like occaſion, terms *ignota*. The connexion lies thus. Having mentioned *Silenus* in ỿ 239, one of the commoneſt characters in this drama, an objection immediately offers itſelf; "but "what good poet will engage in ſubjects and "characters ſo trite and hackney'd?" The anſwer is, *ex noto fictum carmen ſequar*, i. e. however trite and well known this and ſome other characters, eſſential to the ſatyr, are, and muſt be; yet will there be ſtill room for fiction and genius to ſhew itſelf. The conduct and diſpoſition of the play may be wholly new, and above the ability of common writers, *tantum ſeries juncturaque pollet.*

244. SYLVIS DEDUCTI CAVEANT etc.] Having before [ỿ 232] ſettled the true idea of the ſatyric ſtyle in general, he now treats of the peculiar language of the ſatyrs themſelves. This common ſenſe demands to be in conformity with their ſylvan character, neither affectedly tender and gallant, on the one hand; nor groſsly and offenſively obſcene, on the other. The *firſt* of theſe cautions ſeems levelled at a falſe improvement, which, on the introduction of the Roman

Roman ſatyr, was probably attempted on the ſimple, rude plan of the Greek, without conſidering the ruſtic extraction and manners of the fauns and ſatyrs. The *latter*, obliquely glances at the impurities of the Atellane, whoſe licentious ribaldry, as hath been obſerved, would, of courſe, infect the firſt eſſays of the Roman ſatyr.

But theſe rules ſo neceſſary to be followed in the *ſatyric*, are (to obſerve it by the way) ſtill more eſſential to the PASTORAL poem: the fortunes and character of which (though numberleſs volumes have been written upon it) may be given in few words.

The prodigious number of writings, called Paſtoral, which have been current in all times, and in all languages, ſhews there is ſomething very taking in this poem. And no wonder, ſince it addreſſes itſelf to THREE leading principles in human nature, THE LOVE OF EASE, THE LOVE OF BEAUTY, and THE MORAL SENSE: ſuch pieces as theſe being employed in repreſenting to us the TRANQUILLITY, the INNOCENCE, and the SCENERY, of the rural life. But though theſe ideas are of themſelves agreeable, good ſenſe will not be ſatisfied unleſs they appear to have ſome foundation in truth and nature. And even, then, their impreſſion will be

but

but faint, if they are not, further, employed to *convey inſtruction*, or *intereſt the heart*.

Hence the different *forms*, under which this poem hath appeared. THEOCRITUS thought it ſufficient to give a *reality* to his pictures of the rural manners. But in ſo doing it was too apparent that his draught would often be coarſe and unpleaſing. And, in fact, we find that his ſhepherds, contrary to the poet's rule,

——*immunda crepent ignominioſaque dicta.*

VIRGIL avoided this extreme. Without departing very widely from the ſimplicity of ruſtic nature, his ſhepherds are more decent, their lives more ſerene, and, in general, the ſcene more inviting. But the refinements of his age not well agreeing to theſe ſimple delineations, and his views in writing not being merely to *entertain*, he ſaw fit to allegorize theſe agreeable fancies, and make them the vehicles of *hiſtorical*, and ſometimes even of *philoſophic*, information.

Our SPENSER wanted to engroſs all the beauties of his maſters; and ſo, to the artleſs and too natural drawing of the *Greek*, added the deep allegoric deſign of the *Latin*, poet.

One eaſily ſees that this ænigmatic caſt of the paſtoral was meant to give it an air of inſtruction, and to make it a reaſonable enter-

tainment

tainment to ſuch as would nauſeate a ſort of writing,

> "Where pure deſcription held the place of
> "ſenſe."

But this refinement was out of place, as not only inconſiſtent with the ſimplicity of the paſtoral character, but as tending to rob us in a good degree of the *pleaſure*, which theſe amuſing and picturеſque poems are intended to give.

Others therefore took another route. The famous TASSO, by an effort of genius which hath done him more honour than even his epic talents, produced a new kind of paſtoral, by engrafting it on the drama. And under this form, paſtoral poetry became all the vogue. The charming AMINTAS was even commented by the greateſt ſcholars and critics. It was read, admired, and imitated by all the world.

There is no need to depreciate the fine copies that were taken of it, in Italy. But thoſe by our own poets were, by far, the beſt. SHAKESPEARE had, indeed, ſet the example of ſomething like paſtoral dramas, in our language; and in his *Winter's Tale*, *As ye like it*, and ſome other of his pieces, has enchanted every body with his natural ſylvan manners, and ſylvan ſcenes. But FLETCHER ſet himſelf, in earneſt, to emulate the Italian, yet ſtill with an eye of reverence

reverence towards the Engliſh, poet. In his *faithful ſhepherdeſs* he ſurpaſſes the *former*, in the variety of his paintings and the beauty of his ſcene; and only falls ſhort of the *latter*, in the truth of manners, and a certain original grace of invention which no imitation can reach. The faſhion was now ſo far eſtabliſhed, that every poet of the time would try his hand at a paſtoral. Even ſurly BEN, though he found no precedent for it among his antients, was caught with the beauty of this novel drama, and, it muſt be owned, has written above himſelf in the fragment of his *ſad ſhepherd.*—The ſcene, at length, was cloſed with the *Comus* of MILTON, who, in his rural paintings, almoſt equalled the ſimplicity and nature of Shakeſpeare and Fletcher, and, in the purity and ſplendor of his expreſſion, outdid TASSO.

In this new form of the paſtoral, what was childiſh before, is readily admitted and excuſed. A ſimple *moral* tale being the groundwork of the piece, the charms of deſcription and all the embelliſhments of the ſcene are only ſubſervient to the higher purpoſe of picturing the manners, or touching the heart.

But the good ſenſe of Shakeſpeare, or perhaps the felicity of his genius, was admirable. Inſtead of the deep tragic air of Taſſo (which has been generally followed) and his continu-

ance of the paſtoral ſtrain, even to ſatiety, through *five* acts, he only made uſe of theſe playful images to enrich his comic ſcenes. He ſaw, I ſuppoſe, that paſtoral ſubjects were unfit to bear a tragic diſtreſs. And beſides, when the diſtreſs riſes to any height, the wantonneſs of paſtoral imagery grows diſtaſteful. Whereas the genius of comedy admits of humbler diſtreſſes; and leaves us at leiſure to recreate ourſelves with theſe images, as no way interfering with the draught of characters, or the management of a comic tale. But to make up in *ſurprize* what was wanting in *paſſion*, Shakeſpeare hath, with great judgment, adopted the popular ſyſtem of Faeries; which, while it ſo naturally ſupplies the place of the old ſylvan theology, gives a wildneſs to this ſort of paſtoral painting which is perfectly inimitable.

In a word; if Taſſo had the honour of inventing the *paſtoral drama*, properly ſo called; Shakeſpeare has ſhewn us the juſt application of *paſtoral poetry*; which, however amuſing to the imagination, good ſenſe will hardly endure, except in a ſhort dialogue, or in ſome occaſional dramatic ſcenes; and in *theſe* only, as it ſerves to the diſplay of characters and the conduct of the poet's plot.

And to confirm theſe obſervations on paſtoral poetry, which may be thought too ſevere, one may

may obſerve that ſuch, in effect, was the judgment paſſed upon it by that great critic, as well as wit, CERVANTES. He concludes his famous adventures, with a kind of project for his knight and ſquire *to turn ſhepherds*: an evident ridicule on the turn of that time for paſtoral poems and romances, that were beginning to ſucceed to their books of heroic knight-errantry. Not, but it contains, alſo, a fine ſtroke of *moral criticiſm*, as implying, what is ſeen from experience to be too true, that men capable of running into one enthuſiaſm are ſeldom cured of it but by ſome ſudden diverſion of the imagination, which drives them into another.

In concluſion, the reader will ſcarcely aſk me, why, in this deduction of the hiſtory and genius of paſtoral poetry, I have taken no notice of what has been written of this kind, in France; which, if it be not the moſt *unpoetical* nation in Europe, is at leaſt the moſt *unpaſtoral*. Nor is their *criticiſm* of this poem much better than their execution. A late writer [p] indeed pronounces M. de Fontenelle's diſcourſe on paſtoral poetry *to be one of the fineſt pieces of criticiſm in the world*. For my part, I can only ſay it is rather more tolerable than his paſtorals.

[p] Mr. Hume, OF SIMPLICITY AND REFINEMENT.

248. OFFENDENTUR ENIM QUIBUS EST EQUUS ET PATER ET RES.] The poet, in his endeavour to reclaim his countrymen from the *taſte obſcene*, very politely, by a common figure, repreſents that as being the *fact*, which he wiſhed to be ſo. For what reception the rankeſt obſcenities met with on the Roman ſtage we learn from Ovid's account of the ſucceſs of the MIMI:

*Nobilis hos virgo matronaque, virque puerque,*
*Spectat: et è magnâ parte* ſenatus *adeſt.*
Triſt. ii. ✱ 501.

This, indeed, was not till ſome time after the date of this epiſtle. But we may gueſs from hence what muſt have been the tendency of the general diſpoſition, and may ſee to how little effect the poet had laboured to divert the public attention from the *Mimes* to his reformed *Atellanes*.

251. SYLLABA LONGA BREVI, etc.] This whole critique on the ſatyrs concludes with ſome directions about the Iambic verſe. When the commentary aſſerts, that this metre was common to tragedy and the ſatyrs, this is not to be taken ſtrictly; the ſatyrs, in this reſpect, as in every other, ſuſtaining a ſort of intermediate character betwixt tragedy and comedy. For,

2 accurately

accurately ſpeaking, their proper meaſure, as the Grammarians teach, was the Iambic, enlivened with the tribrachys. "*Gaudent* [Victor. "l. ii. c. met. Iamb.] *triſyllabo pede et maxime* "*tribrache.*" Yet there was likeneſs enough to conſider this whole affair of the metre under the ſame head. The Roman dramatic writers were very careleſs in their verſification, which aroſe, as is hinted, ✝ 259, from an immoderate and undiſtinguiſhing veneration of their old poets.

In concluſion of all that has been delivered on the ſubject of theſe *ſatyrs*, it may be amuſing to the learned reader to hear a celebrated French critic expreſs himſelf in the following manner; "*Les Romains donnoient* encore le nom de Satyre "à une eſpece de *Piece Paſtorale*; qui tenoit, *dit* "*on*, le milieu entre la Tragedie et la Comedie. "*C'eſt tout ce que nous en ſçavons.*" [*Mem. de l'Hiſt. des Belles Lett.* tom. xvii. p. 211.]

264. ET DATA ROMANIS VENIA EST INDIGNA POETIS.] It appears certainly, that what is ſaid here concerning the metre of dramatic poems, was peculiarly calculated for the correction of the Roman negligence, and inaccuracy in this reſpect. This, if it had not been ſo expreſsly told us, would have been ſeen from the few remaining fragments of the old Latin plays, in which a remarkable careleſneſs of

numbers is obſerved. This gives a preſumption, that, with the like advantage of conſulting them, it would alſo appear, that the reſt of the poet's rules were directed to the ſame end, and that even ſuch, as are delivered in the moſt abſolute and general form, had a peculiar reference, agreeably to what is here taught of the plan of this poem, to the correſponding defects in the ſtate of the Roman ſtage.

270. AT VESTRI PROAVI PLAUTINOS ET NUMEROS ET LAUDAVERE SALES; NIMIUM PATIENTER UTRUMQUE, NE DICAM STULTE, MIRATI;] It hath been thought ſtrange, that Horace ſhould paſs ſo ſevere a cenſure on the *wit* of Plautus, which yet appeared to Cicero ſo admirable, that he ſpeaks of it as *elegans, urbanum, ingenioſum, facetum.* [De Off. i. 29.] Nor can it be ſaid, that this difference of judgment was owing to the improved delicacy of taſte for wit, in the Auguſtan age, ſince it doth not appear, that Horace's own jokes, when he attempts to divert us in this way, are at all better than Cicero's.

The common anſwer, ſo far as it reſpects the poet, is, I believe, the true one: "that endea-"vouring to beat down the exceſſive veneration "of the elder Roman poets, and, among the reſt "(as appears from 2 Ep. i. and A. P. 54.) of

"Plautus,

"Plautus, he cenſures, without reſerve, every "the leaſt defect in his writings; though, in "general, he agreed with Cicero in admiring "him." But then this was all. For that he was not ſo over-nice as to diſlike Plautus' wit in the main, and, but in this view, probably had not criticized him at all, I collect from his expreſs approbation of the wit of the old *comedy*; which certainly was not more delicate, than that of *Plautus*.

*ridiculum acri*
*Fortius et melius magnas plerumque ſecat res.*
*Illi, ſcripta quibus comœdia priſca viris eſt,*
*Hoc ſtabant,* HOC SUNT IMITANDI.

I. S. x. 15.

I know, it hath been thought, that, even in this very place, where he cenſures the wit of Plautus, he directs us *ad Græca exemplaria*, i. e. as his critics underſtand him, to Ariſtophanes, and the other writers of the old Comedy; but ſuch a direction in this place, were altogether improper, and the ſuppoſition is, beſides, a palpable miſtake. For the *Græca exemplaria* are referred to *only*, as models in exact verſification, as the tenor of the place fully ſhews. And what Horace afterwards remarks on the wit of Plautus, in addition to the obſervations on metre, is a new and diſtinct criticiſm, and hath no kind of reference to the preceding direction. But ſtill,

as I ſaid, Horace appears no ſuch enemy to the old comic wit, as, without the particular reaſon aſſigned, to have ſo ſeverely condemned it. The difficulty is to account for Cicero's ſo peculiar admiration of it, and that a taſte, otherwiſe ſo exact, as his, ſhould delight in the coarſe humour of Plautus, and the old comedy. The caſe, I believe, was this:

Cicero had imbibed a ſtrong reliſh of the frank and libertine wit of the old comedy, as beſt ſuited to the genius of popular eloquence; which, though it demands to be tempered with ſome urbanity, yet never attains its end ſo effectually, as when let down and accommodated, in ſome certain degree, to the general taſte and manners of the people. This Cicero in effect owns, when he tells us, the main end of jeſting at the bar [De Orat. ccxl.] is, not to acquire the credit of conſummate humour, but to carry the cauſe, *ut proficiamus aliquid*: that is, *to make an impreſſion on the people*; which is generally, we know, better done by a coarſer joke, than by the elegance of refined raillery. And that this was the real ground of Cicero's preference of the old comedy to the new, may be concluded, not only from the nature of the thing, and his own example (for he was ever reckoned intemperate in his jeſts, which by no means anſwer to the elegance of his character) but is certainly collected from what

what Quintilian, in his account of it, expreſsly obſerves of the old comedy, *Neſcio an ulla poeſis (poſt Homerum) aut ſimilior ſit oratoribus, aut ad oratores faciendos aptior.* The reaſon, doubtleſs, was, that *ſtrength*, and *prompt and eloquent freedom*, *Vires et facundiſſima libertas*, which he had before obſerved, ſo peculiarly belonged to it.

And this, I think, will go ſome way towards clearing an embaraſſing circumſtance in the hiſtory of the Roman learning, which I know not, if any writer hath yet taken notice of. It is, that though Menander and the authors of the new comedy were afterwards admired, as the only maſters of the comic drama, yet this does not appear to have been ſeen, or, at leaſt, ſo fully acknowledged, by the Roman writers, till after the Auguſtan age; notwithſtanding that the Roman taſte was, from that time, viſibly declining. The reaſon, I doubt not, was, that the popular eloquence, which continued, in a good degree of vigour, to that time, participating more of the freedom of the *old* comic banter, and rejecting, as improper to its end, the refinements of the *new*, inſenſibly depraved the public taſte; which, by degrees only, and not till a ſtudied and cautious declamation had, by the neceſſary influence of abſolute power, ſucceeded to the liberty of their old oratory, was fully reconciled to the delicacy and ſtrict decorum of Menander's

wit.

wit. Even the caſe of Terence, which, at firſt ſight, might ſeem to bear hard againſt it, confirms this account. This poet, ſtruck with the ſupreme elegance of Menander's manner, and attempting too ſoon, before the public taſte was ſufficiently formed for it, to bring it on the ſtage, had occaſion for all the credit, his noble patrons could give him, to ſupport himſelf againſt the popular clamor. What was the object of that *clamour*, we learn from a curious paſſage in one of his prologues, where his adverſary is made to object,

*Quas—fecit—fabulas*
*Tenui eſſe oratione et ſcriptura levi.*

Prol. ad Phorm.

The ſenſe of which is not, as his commentators have idly thought, *that his ſtyle was low and trifling*, for this could never be pretended, but *that his dialogue was inſipid, and his characters, and, in general, his whole compoſition, without that comic heightening, which their vitiated taſtes required.* This further appears from thoſe common verſes of Cæſar, where, characterizing the genius of Terence's plays, as devoid of this comic ſpirit, he calls them *lenia ſcripta*:

LENIBUS *atque utinam* SCRIPTIS *adjuncta foret vis.*
COMICA:

words, which are the cleareſt comment on the lines in queſtion.

But

But this famous judgment of Cæſar deſerves to be ſcrutinized more narrowly. For it may be ſaid "that by *vis comica* I ſuppoſe him to mean the comic drollery of the *old* and *middle* comedy; whereas it is more probable he meant the elegant but high humour of the beſt writers of the *new*, particularly of Menander; why elſe doth he call Terence, "*Dimidiate Menander*?" There is the more force in this objection, becauſe *the elegant but high humour*, here mentioned, is of the trueſt merit in comedy; and becauſe Menander, of whom the antients ſpeak ſo honourably, and whom we only know by their encomiums, may be reaſonably thought to have excelled in it. What occurs in anſwer to it, is this.

1. The Antients are generally allowed to have had very little of what we now underſtand by *comic humour*. Lucian is the *firſt*, indeed the only one, who hath properly left us any conſiderable ſpecimens of it. And he is almoſt modern with regard to the writers under conſideration. But,

2. That *Menander and the writers of the new comedy did not excel in it*, is probable for theſe reaſons.

1. The moſt judicious critic of antiquity, when he is purpoſely conſidering the excellencies of the Greek comedians, and, what is more,

more, expoſing the comparative deficiencies of the Roman, ſays not a word of it. He thinks, indeed, that *Terence's*, which yet he pronounces to be moſt elegant, is but the fainteſt ſhadow of the Greek, comedy. But then his reaſon is, *quod ſermo ipſe Romanus non recipere videatur illam ſolis conceſſam Atticis venerem.* [L. x. 1.] It ſeems then as if the main defect, which this critic obſerved in Terence's comedy, was a want of that inexplicable grace of language, which ſo peculiarly belonged to the Greeks; a grace of ſo ſubtle a nature that even they could only catch it in one dialect—*quando eam ne Græci quidem in alio genere linguæ non obtinuerint.* [Ib.]".

2. Some of Terence's plays may be almoſt ſaid to be direct tranſlations from Menander. And the comic humour, ſuppoſed in the objection, being of the trueſt taſte, no reaſon can be imagined why the poet ſhould ſo induſtriouſly avoid to tranſfuſe this laſt and higheſt grace into his comedy. Eſpecially ſince the popular cry againſt him proceeded from hence, that he was wanting in comic pleaſantry; a *want*, which by a ſtricter attention to this virtue of his great original, ſuppoſing Menander to have been poſſeſſed of it, he might ſo eaſily have ſupplied. And leſt it ſhould be thought he omitted to do this, as not conceiving any thing of this *virtue*, or as not approving it, we find in him, but rarely indeed, ſome

ſome delicate touches, which approach as nearly as any thing in antiquity to this genuine comic humour. Of which kind is that in the *Hecyra:*

*Tum tu igitur nihil adtuliſti huc plus unâ ſententiâ?*

For theſe reaſons I ſhould ſuppoſe that *Menander* and the writers of the new comedy, from whom Terence copied, had little of this beauty.

But what ſhall we ſay then to Cæſar's *dimidiate Menander?* It refers, I believe, ſolely to what Quintilian, as we have ſeen, obſerved, that, with all his emulation of Attic elegance, he was unable, through the native ſtubbornneſs of the Latin tongue, to come up to the Greek comedy. The very text of Cæſar leads to this meaning.

*Tu quoque, tu in ſummis, ô dimidiate Menander,*
*Poneris, et merito,* PURI SERMONIS AMATOR.

His excellence conſiſted in the *purity and urbanity of his expreſſion,* in which praiſe if he ſtill fell ſhort of his maſter, the fault was not in him, but the intractability of his language. And in this view Cæſar's addreſs carries with it the higheſt *compliment.* Quintilian had ſaid in relation to this point, *Vix levem conſequimur umbram.* But Cæſar, in a fond admiration of his merit, cries out,

*Tu quoque,* TU *in ſummis,* ô DIMIDIATE MENANDER.

His

His cenſure of him is delivered in the following lines:

*Lenibus atque utinam ſcriptis adjuncta foret vis*
*Comica, ut æquato virtus polleret honore*
*Cum Græcis, neque in hâc deſpectus parte jaceres;*
*Unum hoc maceror et doleo tibi deeſſe, Terenti.*

Which, again, gives no countenance to the ſuppoſition of Menander's excelling in *comic humour*. For he does not ſay, that with the addition of this talent he had equalled *Menander*, but in general, the GREEKS—*æquato virtus polleret honore cum* GRÆCIS. And this was what occaſioned Cæſar's regret. He wiſhed to ſee him unite all the merits of the Greek comedy. As far as the Latin tongue would permit, he had ſhewn himſelf a maſter of the elegance of the *new*. What he further required in him was the ſtrong wit and ſatyr of the *old*. His favourite had then rivalled, in every praiſe, the Greek writers.

And, if this be admitted, nothing hinders but that by *vis comica* Cæſar may be underſtood to mean (how conſiſtently with the admired urbanity of Terence is not the queſtion) the comic pleaſantry of the middle or old comedy.

The thing indeed could hardly be otherwiſe. For Plautus, who chiefly copied from the *middle* comedy, had, by the drollery of his wit, and the buffoon

buffoon pleaſantry of his ſcenes, ſo enchanted the people as to continue the reigning favourite of the ſtage, even long after Afranius and Terence had appeared on it. Nay the humour continued through the Auguſtan age [*q*], when, as we learn from Horace, in many parts of his writings, the public applauſe ſtill followed Plautus; in whom though himſelf could ſee many faults, yet he does not appear to have gone ſo far, as, upon the whole, to give the preference to Terence. Afterwards indeed the caſe altered. Paterculus admires; and Plutarch and Quintilian are perfectly charmed: *ita omnem vitæ imaginem expreſſit, ita eſt omnibus rebus, perſonis, affectibus accommodatus.* This character, one would think, ſhould have fitted him alſo for a complete model to the orator. And this, as might be expected, was Quintilian's opinion. For, though he ſaw, as appears from the paſſage already quoted, that the writers of the old comedy were, in fact, *the likeſt to orators, and the moſt proper to form them to the practice of the Forum*, yet, in admiration of the abſolute perfection of Menander's manner, and criticiſing him by the rules of a juſt and accurate rhetoric, and not at all in the views of a practical orator, he pro-

[*q*] And no wonder, when, as Suetonius tells us, the emperor himſelf was ſo delighted with the old comedy. [c. 89.]

nounces

nounces him to be a complete pattern of oratorial excellence: *vel unus, diligenter lectus, ad cuncta efficienda ſufficiat*, L. x. c. 1. Yet Cicero, it ſeems, thought otherwiſe; for he ſcarcely, as I remember, mentions the name of Menander in his rhetorical books, though he is very large in commending the authors of the old Greek comedy. The reaſon was unqueſtionably that we have been explaining: The delicate obſervance of decorum, for which this poet was ſo famous, *in omnibus mire cuſtoditur ab hoc poeta decorum*, rendered him an unfit model for a popular ſpeaker, eſpecially in Rome, where an orator was much more likely to carry his point by the *vis comica*, the *broader mirth* of Ariſtophanes, or Plautus, than by the delicate railleries, and exquiſite paintings of Menander, or Terence.

273. SI MODO EGO ET VOS SCIMUS INURBANUM LEPIDO SEPONERE DICTO.] It was very late ere the ancients became acquainted with this diſtinction. Indeed it does not appear, they ever poſſeſſed it in that ſupreme degree, which might have been expected from their exquiſite diſcernment in other inſtances. Even Horace himſelf, though his pictures of life are commonly the moſt delicate, and wrought up in the higheſt beauty of humour, yet, when he affects the *plaiſant*, and purpoſely aims at the

the comic ſtyle and manner, is obſerved to ſink beneath himſelf extremely. The truth is, there is ſomething low, and what the French call *groſſier*, in the whole caſt of antient wit; which is rather a kind of rude, illiberal ſatire, than a juſt and temperate ridicule, reſtrained by the exact rules of civility and good ſenſe. This a celebrated writer, who ſeems willing to think the moſt favourably of the antient wits, in effect owns, when, after quoting certain inſtances of their raillery, he ſays, *Ces exemples, quoique vifs et bons en leur genre, ont quelque choſe de trop dur, qui ne s'accommoderoit pas à nôtre maniere de vivre; et ce ſeroit ce que nous appellons rompre en viſiers, que de dire en face des veritez auſſi forts que celles-là.* [Rec. de bons Contes et de bons Mots, p. 89.] This rudeneſs, complained of, appears in nothing more evident, than in their perpetual banter on corporal infirmities, which runs through all the wits both of Greece and Rome. And to ſhew us, that this was not a practice, they allowed themſelves in againſt rule, Cicero mentions corporal infirmities [De Or. l. ii. c. 59.] as one of the moſt legitimate ſources of the RIDICULOUS. *Eſt deformitatis et corporis vitiorum ſatis bella materies.* And, in another place, *Valde ridentur etiam imagines, quæ fere in deformitatem, aut in aliquod vitium corporis ducuntur cum ſimilitudine turpioris,* etc. [ib. c. 66.]

c. 66.] And this, which is very remarkable, though they ſaw the abſurdity of it, as appears from the anſwer of Lamia, recorded by Cicero, to a joke of this kind, *Non potui mihi formam ipſe fingere*, [ib. c. 65.] The univerſal prevalence of a practice ſo abſurd in itſelf, and ſeen by themſelves to be ſo, in the two politeſt ſtates of the old world, muſt needs have ſprung from ſome very *general*, and *powerful* cauſe; which, becauſe it hath not, that I know of, been conſidered by any writer, I ſhall here attempt to open and explain. The ſubject is curious, and would require a volume to do it juſtice. I can only hint at the principal reaſons, which appear to me to have been theſe.

I. *The free and popular government of thoſe ſtates.* This, preſerving an equality of condition, and thereby ſpreading a fearleſsneſs and independency through all ranks and orders of men, of courſe produced and indulged the utmoſt freedom of expreſſion, uninfluenced by hopes of favour, and unawed by fear of perſonal offence; the two ſources, from whence the civility of a more cautious ridicule is derived. Now of all the ſpecies of raillery, the moſt natural and *obvious* to a people unreſtrained by theſe cauſes, is ever the *coarſeſt*, ſuch as that on corporal deformities; as appears from its prevailing every where, in all forms of government, among the

loweſt

loweſt of the people, betwixt whom thoſe cauſes never ſubſiſt. But this reaſon involves in it ſome particulars, which deſerve to be conſidered. 1. The *orators*, who catched it from the conſtitution themſelves, contributed in their turn to forward and help on this diſpoſition to uncivilized mirth. For, the form of their government requiring immediate, and almoſt continual, applications to the people; and the nature of ſuch applications giving frequent exerciſe to their wit, it was natural for them to ſuit it to the capacities of their auditory; if indeed they had ſeen better themſelves. Thus we find the orators in the Forum, even in the later times of the Roman republic, expoſing their adverſary to the broad mirth of the populace, by enlarging on his *low ſtature*, *ugly face*, or *diſtorted chin*. Inſtances of which may be met with in Cicero's treatiſe De oratore; and even, as hath been obſerved, in ſome orations and other pieces of Cicero himſelf. 2. From the *Forum* the humour inſenſibly ſpread amongſt all orders, and particularly, amongſt the writers for the ſtage, where it was kept up in its full vigour, or rather heightened to a further extravagance, the laughter of the people being its more immediate and direct aim. But, the ſtage not only conformed, as of courſe it would, to the ſpirit of the times (which, for the reaſon already given,

were none of the moſt obſervant of decorum; but, as we ſhall alſo find, it had perhaps the greateſt influence in *producing and forming that ſpirit itſelf.* This will appear, if we recollect, in few words, *the riſe, progreſs, and character of the antient ſtage.*

The Greek drama, we know, had its origin from the looſe, licentious raillery of the rout of Bacchus, indulging to themſelves the freeſt ſallies of taunt and invective, as would beſt ſuit to lawleſs natures, inſpirited by feſtal mirth, and made extravagant by wine. Hence aroſe, and with a character anſwering to this original, the *ſatyric drama*; the ſpirit of which was afterwards, in good meaſure, revived and continued in the old comedy, and itſelf preſerved, though with conſiderable alteration in the form, through all the ſeveral periods of the Greek ſtage; even when tragedy, which aroſe out of it, was brought to its laſt perfection. Much the ſame may be obſerved of the *Roman* drama, which, we are told, had its riſe in the unreſtrained feſtivity of the ruſtic youth. This gave occaſion to their *Satyræ*, that is, medleys of an irregular form, acted for the diverſion of the people. And, when afterwards Livius Andronicus had, by a further reform, reduced theſe *Satyræ* into regular tragedies, another ſpecies of buffoon ridicule was cultivated, under the name of *Atellanæ fabulæ*;

*bulæ*; which, according to Diomedes' character of them, *were replete with jocular witticiſms, and very much reſembled the Greek ſatyrs. Dictis jocularibus refertæ, ſimiles fere ſunt ſatyricis fabulis Græcorum.* Theſe were ever after retained, and annexed to their moſt regular dramatic entertainments in Rome, juſt as the *ſatyrs* were in Greece; and this (as was ſeen in its place) though much pains was taken to reform, if not wholly remove, them. But to ſhew how ſtrong the paſſion of the Romans was for this rude illiberal banter, even the licentious character of the *Atellanes* did not fully ſatisfy them; but, as if they were determined to ſtick to their genuine ruſticity, they continued the *Satyræ* themſelves, under the name of *Exodia*, that is farces of the groſſeſt and moſt abſurd compoſition; which, to heighten the mirth of the day, were commonly interwoven with the Atellane pieces. The reaſon of the continuance of ſuch ribaldry in the politeſt ages of Greece and Rome hath been inquired into. At preſent it appears, what effect it muſt neceſſarily have upon the public taſte.

II. Another cauſe connected with the foregoing, and riſing out of it, ſeems to have been the feſtal licence of particular ſeaſons, ſuch as the *Dionyſia* and *Panathenæa*, amongſt the Greeks; and the *Bacchanalia* and *Saturnalia*, at

Rome. These latter, it is obſervable, were continued to the lateſt period of the Roman empire, preſerving in them an image, as well of the frank and libertine wit of their old ſtage, as of the original equality and independency of their old times. Quintilian thinks, that, with ſome regulation, good uſe might have been made of theſe ſeaſons of licence, for the cultivating a juſt ſpirit of raillery in the orators of his time. As it was, there is no doubt, they helped much to vitiate and deprave it. His words are theſe: *Quin illæ ipſæ, quæ* DICTA *ſunt ac vocantur, quas certis diebus feſtæ licentiæ dicere ſolebamus, ſi paulum adhibita ratione fingerentur, aut aliquid in his ſerium quoque eſſet admixtum, plurimum poterunt utilitatis afferre: quæ nunc juvenum, aut ſibi ludentium exercitatio eſt.* [Quint. L. iv. c. 3.] Beſides, in Greece, the jeſter was a character by profeſſion, neceſſary to the pleaſantry of private feaſts, and, as we learn from the fine ſatyr in Xenophon's *Sympoſium*, even in that polite age, welcome to all companies [*r*].

[*r*] This is further confirmed from Lucian, who, in the deſcription of a ſplendid feaſt in his ΑΛΕΚΤΡΥΩΝ, and in the *Sympoſium of his* ΛΑΠΙΘΑΙ, brings in the ΓΕΛΩΤΟΠΟΙΟΙ as neceſſary attendants on the entertainment.—But the reader will not take what is ſaid of the *fine ſatyr* of Xenophon's Sympoſium, who hath not obſerved, that this ſort of compoſitions,

From

From theſe reaſons I think it not difficult to account for the coarſeneſs of antient wit. The [illegible] which were in great credit with the antients, are of the nature of dramas, ΗΘΙΚΟΙ ΛΟΓΟΙ, as Ariſtotle would call them. In which the dialogiſts, who are real perſonages as in the *old comedy*, give a lively, and ſometimes exaggerated expreſſion of their own characters. Under this *idea* of a Sympoſium we are prepared to expect *bad* characters as well as *good*. Nothing in the *kind* of compoſition itſelf confined the writer to the *latter*; and the decorum of a *feſtal converſation*, which, in a republic eſpecially, would have a mixture of ſatyr in it, ſeemed to demand the *former*. We ſee then the undoubted purpoſe of Xenophon in the perſons of his JESTER and SYRACUSIAN; and of Plato, in thoſe of ARISTOPHANES and ſome others. Where we may further take notice, that, to prevent the abuſe and miſconſtruction, to which theſe perſonated diſcourſes are ever liable, Socrates is brought in to correct the looſeneſs of them, in both dialogues, and in ſome meaſure doth the office of the dramatic chorus, BONIS FAVENDI. But it is the leſs ſtrange that the moderns have not apprehended the genius of theſe *Sympoſia*, when Athenæus, who profeſſedly criticiſes them, and one would think, had a better opportunity of knowing their real character, hath betrayed the groſſeſt ignorance about them.—I can but juſt hint theſe things, which might afford curious matter for a diſſertation. But enough is ſaid to let the intelligent reader into the true ſecret of theſe *convivial dialogues*, and to explain the ground of the encomium here paſſed upon *one* of them.

free genius of the Greek and Roman conſtitution was unqueſtionably its main ſpring and ſupport. But, when this character of their government was ſeconded by the freedom of their demagogues, the petulance of the ſtage, and the uncontrouled licence of recurring feſtival ſolemnities, it was no wonder, the illiberal manner ſo thoroughly infected all ranks and degrees of the people, as by no after diligence and refinement wholly to be removed. And this theory is indeed confirmed by *fact*. For, when now the tyranny of one man had ingroſſed the power, and oppreſſed the liberties, of Greece, their ſtage refined, their wit poliſhed, and Menander wrote. And though a thorough reform was never made in the Roman ſtage, partly, as Quintilian thinks, from the intractability of their language, but chiefly, it may be, as to the point in queſtion, from the long continuance of their rude farcical ſhews, yet ſomething like this appears to have followed upon the loſs of their freedom; as is plain from the improved delicacy of their later critics; who, as Quintilian and Plutarch, are very profuſe in their encomiums on Menander, and the *new* comedy; whereas we find little ſaid of it by the Auguſtan writers, who ſeem generally to have preferred the coarſer wit and pleaſantry of the *old*. The ſtate of modern wit too confirms this account. For

it

it has grown up, for the moſt part, under limited monarchies, in which their ſcenical entertainments were more moderate; or for plain reaſons muſt leſs affect the public taſte. Whenever therefore a turn for letters has prevailed, a poignant, but liberal kind of wit hath generally ſprung up with it. Where it is worth obſerving, the growing tyranny in ſome ſtates hath either extinguiſhed it intirely, or refined it into an effeminate and timid delicacy, as the growing licentiouſneſs in others hath ſunk it into a rude and brutal coarſeneſs; whilſt, by a due mixture of liberty and letters, we have ſeen it acquire a proper temperament at home, and, as managed by our beſt writers, exhibit a ſpecimen of that ſtrong, yet elegant ridicule, which hath never yet been equalled by any other nation in the world.

275. IGNOTUM TRAGICAE GENUS INVENISSE CAMENAE etc.] The poet, having juſt remarked the negligence of the Roman writers, in two or three inſtances, and, at the ſame time recommended to them the ſuperior care and accuracy of the Greeks (all which is elegantly preparatory to the laſt diviſion of the epiſtle) proceeds in a ſhort view of the Greek drama, to inſinuate, as well the ſucceſsful pains of the Greek writers, as the real ſtate of the Roman

ſtage;

ſtage; the complete glory of which could only be expected, as immediately follows, from a ſpirit of diligence and correctneſs. As this whole connexion is clear and eaſy, ſo is the peculiar method, in which it is conducted, extremely proper. 1. To ſhew, how great the advantage of their ſituation was over that of the Greeks, he obſerves, that the latter had the whole conſtitution of the drama to invent and regulate; which yet, by the application and growing experience of their poets, was ſoon effected; their tragedy, all rude and ſhapeleſs, as it was, in the cart of Theſpis, appearing in its juſt form and proportion on the ſtage of Æſchylus; and their comedy alſo (which, from that time, began to be cultivated) aſſerting its proper character, and, but for the culpable omiſſion of a chorus, reaching the full extent and perfection of its kind.

2. To ſhew, what ſtill remained to them, he brings down the hiſtory of tragedy no lower than Æſchylus; under whom it received its due form and all the eſſentials of its nature, yet ſtill wanted, to its abſolute perfection, the further accuracy and correctneſs of a Sophocles. And, for their comedy, he hints the principal defect of that; its omiſſion, after the manner of the new comedy, of the chorus. There is great addreſs in this conduct. The cenſure alſo implied

plied in it, is perfectly juſt. For, 1. the character of the Roman tragedy, in the times of Horace, was exactly that of Æſchylus. Æſchylus, ſays Quinctilian, was the firſt; "*qui protulit* "*tragœdias*," i. e. who compoſed true legitimate tragedies, *ſublimis et gravis et grandiloquus ſæpe uſque ad vitium*; *ſed rudis in pleriſque et incompoſitus* [L. x. c. i.] the very deſcription, which Horace gives [2 Ep. i. 165.] of the Roman tragedy.

*natura ſublimis et acer,*
*Nam ſpirat tragicum ſatis et feliciter audet;*
*Sed turpem putat inſcitus metuitque lituram.*

2. The ſtate of their comedy, as managed by their beſt writers, Afranius and Terence, was, indeed, much more complete; yet wanted the chorus, which, in the judgment of the poet, it ſeems, was equally neceſſary to the perfection of this, as of the other drama.

3. But the application is made in expreſs terms.

*Nil intentatum noſtri liquere poetæ*, etc.

*i. e.* our poets, as well as the Greek, have, in ſome degree, applied themſelves to improve and regulate the ſtage. In particular, a late innovation, in taking their ſubjects, both of tragedy and comedy, from domeſtic facts, is highly to be applauded. Their ſole diſadvantage is, a

*neglect*

*neglect or contempt of that labour and accuracy, which gave the laſt perfection to the Greek ſcene.*

After this clear and natural expoſition of the connexion of theſe lines, all the difficulties, that have been found in them by certain great critics, vaniſh of themſelves. And the reader now ſees (what the ſagacious Heinſius thought impoſſible to be ſhewn) an ἀκολουθίαν, or conſiſtent, natural order in this part of the epiſtle; which was in imminent danger of loſing all its grace and beauty, by the wild tranſpoſitions of that critic.

278. POST HUNC PERSONAE PALLAEQUE, etc.] M. *Dacier* hath here puzzled himſelf with a difficulty of his own raiſing. He wonders, that Horace ſhould omit, in this hiſtory, the other improvements of Æſchylus, mentioned by Ariſtotle, and that Ariſtotle, in his turn, ſhould omit thoſe, mentioned by Horace. The truth is, neither of them intended a complete account of the improvements of the Greek ſtage; but only ſo much of them, as was neceſſary to the views of each. Ariſtotle, treating of the *internal* conſtitution of the drama, ſpeaks of ſuch changes, made in it by Æſchylus, as reſpected that end. Horace, treating in general of its *form*, as perfected by the pains and application of the ſame poet, ſelects thoſe improvements only, which contraſt beſt to the rude eſſays of Theſpis,

Theſpis, and, while they imply the reſt, exhibit tragedy, as it were, in her proper perſon, on the ſtage. The reader feels the effect of this in the poetry.

288. VEL QUI PRAETEXTAS, VEL QUI DOCUERE TOGATAS.] There hath been much difficulty here in ſettling a very plain point. The queſtion is, whether *prætextas* means *tragedy*, or a ſpecies of *comedy*? The anſwer is very clear from Diomedes, whoſe account is, in ſhort, this. "[1] *Togata* is a general term for all ſorts "of Latin plays, adopting the Roman cuſtoms "and dreſſes; as *Palliatæ* is, for all, adopting "the Græcian. Of the *Togatæ*, the ſeveral "ſpecies are, 1. *Prætexta*, or *Prætextata*, in "which Roman kings and generals were intro-"duced, and is ſo called, becauſe the *prætexta* "was the diſtinguiſhing habit of ſuch perſons. 2. "*Tabernaria*, frequently called [2] *Togata*, though "that word, as we have ſeen, had properly a "larger ſenſe. 3. *Atellana*. 4. *Planipedis*." He next marks the difference of theſe ſeveral ſorts of *Togatæ*, from the ſimilar, correſponding ones of the *Palliatæ*, which are theſe: "1. [4] Tragœdia, abſolutely ſo ſtyled. 2. [5] Comœdia. 3. [6] Satyri. 4. [7] Μῖμος." [Theſe four ſorts of the *palliatæ* were alſo probably in uſe at Rome; certainly, at leaſt, the two former.] It appears then from hence, that

*prætextata*

*prætextata* was properly the Roman tragedy. But he adds, "*Togata prætextata a tragœdia dif-* "*fert*, and it is alſo ſaid, *to be only like tragedy*, "*tragœdiæ ſimilis*." What is this difference and this likeneſs? The explanation follows. "[8] Heroes are introduced in *tragedy*, ſuch as "Oreſtes, Chryſes, and the like. In the *præ-* "*textata*, Brutus, Decius, or Marcellus." So then we ſee, when Græcian characters were introduced, it was called ſimply *tragœdia*; when Roman, *prætextata*; yet both, tragedies. The ſole difference lay in the perſons being foreign or domeſtic. The correſpondence in every other reſpect was exact. The ſame is obſerved of the Roman comedy; when it adopted [9] Greek characters, it was called *comœdia*: when Roman, [20] *Togata Tabernaria*, or [3] *Togata*, ſimply. That the reader may aſſure himſelf of the fidelity of this account, let him take it at large, in the Grammarian's own words. "[1] Togatæ fabulæ "dicuntur, quæ ſcriptæ ſunt ſecundum ritus et "habitus hominum togatorum, id eſt, Romano- "rum (Toga namque Romana eſt), ſicut Græcas "fabulas ab habitu æque palliatas Varro ait "nominari. [3] Togatas autem cum ſit generale "nomen, ſpecialiter tamen pro tabernariis, non "modo communis error uſurpat, ſed et poetæ. "—Togatarum fabularum [2] ſpecies tot fere ſunt, "quot et palliatarum. Nam prima ſpecies eſt "togatarum,

"togatarum, quæ prætextatæ dicuntur, in qui-
" bus imperatorum negotia agebantur et publica,
" et reges Romani vel duces inducuntur, per-
" ſonarum et argumentorum ſublimitate [4] tra-
" gœdiis ſimiles: Prætextatæ autem dicuntur,
" quia fere regum vel magiſtratuum, qui præ-
" texta utuntur, in hujuſmodi fabulis acta com-
" prehenduntur. Secunda ſpecies togatarum,
" quæ tabernariæ dicuntur, humilitate per-
" ſonarum et argumentorum ſimilitudine [5] com-
" œdiis pares—Tertia ſpecies eſt fabularum
" latinarum, quæ—Atellanæ dictæ ſunt, ſimiles
" [6] ſatyricis fabulis, Græcis. Quarta[t] ſpecies
" eſt planipedis, Græce dicitur [7] Μῖμος.—
" Togata prætextata, a [4] tragœdia differt. In
" tragœdia [8] heroes introducuntur. Pacuvius
" tragœdias nominibus heroicis ſcripſit Oreſten,
" Creſten, Chryſen, et his ſimilia. Item Accius.
" In prætextata autem ſcribitur, Brutus, vel
" Decius, vel Marcellus. [9] Togata tabernaria
" a [5] comœdia differt, quod in [9] comœdia Græci
" ritus inducuntur, perſonæque Græcæ, Laches,
" Soſtrata. In illa vero Latinæ." [L. iii. c. de
Com. et Trag. diff.] With this account of
Diomedes agrees perfectly that of *Feſtus*; from
which, however, M. Dacier draws a very dif-
ferent concluſion. " Togatarum duplex eſt
" genus: prætextarum—et tabernariarum." His
inference is, that prætextatæ, as being a ſpecies
of

of the togatæ, muſt needs be comedies; not conſidering that togata is here a generic term, comprehending under it all the ſeveral ſpecies both of the Roman tragedy and comedy. After what hath been ſaid, and eſpecially, after the full and deciſive teſtimony of Diomedes, there can no longer be any doubt about the meaning of *prætextas*; and one muſt be ſurprized to find M. Dacier prefacing his long note on this place in the following important manner: *C'eſt un des plus difficiles paſſages d' Horace, et peutêtre celui qu'il eſt le plus mal aiſé d'eclaircir à cauſe du peu de lumiere que nous donnent les auteurs Latins ſur tout ce qui regarde leurs pieces de theatre.*

281. SUCCESSIT VETUS HIS COMOEDIA, etc.] *i. e.* Comedy began to be cultivated and improved from the time that tragedy had obtained its end, ἔσχε τὴν ἑαυτῆς φύσιν, under Æſchylus. There is no reaſon to ſuppoſe, with ſome critics, that Horace meant to date its origin from hence. The ſuppoſition is, in truth, contradicted by *experience* and the *order of things*. For, as a celebrated French writer obſerves, "*Le talent d'imiter, qui nous eſt naturel, nous porte plutôt à la comedie qui roule ſur des choſes de nôtre connoiſſance qu'à la Tragedie, qui prend des ſujets plus èloignés de l'uſage commun; et en effect, en Greece auſſi bien qu'en France, la Comedie eſt l'aînée*

Vol. I. de

*de la tragedie.*" [Hiſt. du Theat. Franç. par M. de Fontenelle.] The *latter* part of this aſſertion is clear from the piece referred to; and the *other*, which reſpects Greece, ſeems countenanced by Ariſtotle himſelf [περ. ποιητ. κ. ε.]. 'Tis true, Comedy, though its riſe be every where, at leaſt, as early as that of tragedy, is perfected much later. Menander, we know, appeared long after Æſchylus. And, though the French tragedy, to ſpeak with Ariſtotle, ἔσχε τὴν αὑτῆς φύσιν in the hands of Corneille, this cannot be ſaid of their comedy; which was forced to wait for a Moliere, before it arrived at that pitch of perfection. But then this is owing to the ſuperior difficulty of the comic drama. Nor is it any objection that the contrary of this happened at Rome. For the Romans, when they applied themſelves in earneſt to the ſtage, had not to invent, but to imitate or rather *tranſlate*, the perfect models of Greece. And it chanced, for reaſons which I ſhall not ſtay to deduce, that their poets had better ſucceſs in copying their *comedy*, than *tragedy*.

284. TURPITER OBTICUIT.—] Evidently, becauſe, though the *jus nocendi* was taken away, yet that was no good reaſon, why the chorus ſhould intirely ceaſe. M. Dacier miſtakes the matter. *Le chœur ſe tût ignominieuſement, parce*

*que la loi reprima ſa licence, et que ce fut, à proprement parler, la loi qui le bannit; ce qu' Horace regarde comme une eſpece de flétriſſure. Properly ſpeaking*, the law only aboliſhed the *abuſe* of the chorus. The ignominy lay in dropping the entire uſe of it, on account of this reſtraint. Horace was of opinion, that the chorus ought to have been retained; though the ſtate had abridged it of the licence, it ſo much delighted in, of an illimited, and intemperate ſatyr. *Sublatus chorus fuit*, ſays Scaliger, *cujus illæ videntur eſſe præcipuæ partes, ut potiſſimum quos liberet, læderent.*

286. NEC MINIMUM MERUERE DECUS VESTIGIA GRAECA AUSI DESERERE ET CELEBRARE DOMESTICA FACTA.] This judgment of the poet, recommending domeſtic ſubjects, as fitteſt for the ſtage, may be inforced from many obvious reaſons. As 1. that it renders the drama infinitely more *affecting:* and this on many accounts. 1. As a ſubject, taken from our own annals, muſt of courſe carry with it an air of greater probability, at leaſt to the generality of the people, than one borrowed from thoſe of any other nation. 2. As we all find a perſonal intereſt in the ſubject. 3. As it of courſe affords the beſt and eaſieſt opportunities of catching our minds, by frequent references to our manners, prejudices, and cuſtoms. And of how

great

great importance this is, may be learned from hence, that, even in the exhibition of foreign characters, dramatic writers have found themſelves obliged to ſacrifice truth and probability to the humour of the people; and to dreſs up their perſonages; contrary to their own better judgment, in ſome degree according to the mode and manners of their reſpective countries [*s*]. And 4. as the writer himſelf, from an intimate acquaintance with the character and genius of his own nation, will be more likely to draw the manners with life and ſpirit.

II. Next, which ſhould ever be one great point in view, it renders the drama more gene-

[*s*] "L'étude égale des poëtes de différens tems à "plaire à leurs ſpectateurs, a encore influé dans la "maniere de peindre les characters. Ceux qui paroiſ- "ſent ſur la ſcene Angloiſe, Eſpagnole, Françoiſe, "ſont plus Anglois, Eſpagnols, ou François que "Grecs ou Romains, en un mot que ce qu'ils doivent "être. Il ne faut qu'en peu diſcernement pour "s'appercevoir que nos Céſars et nos Achilles, en "gardans même une partie de leur caractere primitif, "prennent droit de naturalité dans le païs où ils ſont "tranſplantez, ſemblables à ces portraits, qui ſortent "de la main d'un peintre Flamand, Italien, ou "François, et qui portent l'empreinte du païs. On "veut plaire à ſa nation, et rien ne plait tant que la "reſſemblance de manieres et de genie." [P. Brumoy, vol. i. p. 400.]

rally uſeful in its moral deſtination. For, it being converſant about domeſtic acts, the great inſtruction of the fable more ſenſibly affects us; and the characters exhibited, from the part we take in their good or ill qualities, will more probably influence our conduct.

III. Laſtly, this judgment will deſerve the greater regard, as the conduct recommended was, in fact, the practice of our great models, the Greek writers; in whoſe plays, it is obſervable, there is ſcarcely a ſingle ſcene, which lies out of the confines of Greece.

But, notwithſtanding theſe reaſons, the practice hath, in all times, been but little followed. The Romans, after ſome few attempts in this way (from whence the poet took the occaſion of delivering it as a dramatic precept), ſoon relapſed into their old uſe; as appears from Seneca's, and the titles of other plays, written in, or after the Auguſtan age. Succeeding times continued the ſame attachment to Grecian, with the addition of an equal fondneſs for Roman, ſubjects. The reaſon in both inſtances hath been ever the ſame: that ſtrong and early prejudice, approaching ſomewhat to adoration, in favour of the illuſtrious names of theſe two great ſtates. The account of this matter is very eaſy; for their writings, as they furniſh the buſineſs of our younger, and the amuſement of

our

our riper, years, and more eſpecially make the ſtudy of all thoſe, who devote themſelves to poetry and the ſtage, inſenſibly infix in us an exceſſive veneration for all affairs in which they were concerned; inſomuch that no other ſubjects or events ſeem conſiderable enough, or riſe, in any proportion, to our ideas of the dignity of the tragic ſcene, but ſuch as time and long admiration have conſecrated in the annals of their ſtory. Our Shakeſpeare was, I think, the firſt that broke through this bondage of claſſical ſuperſtition. And he owed this felicity, as he did ſome others, to his want of what is called the advantage of a learned education. Thus uninfluenced by the weight of early prepoſſeſſion, he ſtruck at once into the road of nature and common ſenſe: and without deſigning, without knowing it, hath left us in his hiſtorical plays, with all their anomalies, an exacter reſemblance of the Athenian ſtage, than is any where to be found in its moſt profeſſed admirers and copyiſts.

I will only add, that, for the more ſucceſsful execution of this rule of celebrating domeſtic acts, much will depend on the æra, from whence the ſubject is taken. Times too remote have almoſt the ſame inconveniences, and none of the advantages, which attend the ages of Greece and Rome. And, for thoſe of later date, they

 are

are too much familiarized to us, and have not as yet acquired that venerable caſt and air, which tragedy demands, and age only can give. There is no fixing this point with preciſion. In the general, that æra is the fitteſt for the poet's purpoſe, which, though freſh enough in our minds to warm and intereſt us in the event of the action, is yet at ſo great a diſtance from the preſent times, as to have loſt all thoſe mean and diſparaging circumſtances, which unavoidably adhere to recent deeds; and, in ſome meaſure, ſink the nobleſt modern tranſactions to the level of ordinary life.

295. INGENIUM MISERA, etc.] *Sæpe audivi poetam bonum neminem (id quod a Democrito et Platone in ſcriptis relictum eſſe dicunt) ſine inflammatione animorum exiſtere poſſe et ſine quodam afflatu quaſi furoris.* [Cic. De orat. l. ii. c. xlvi.] And ſo Petronius, *præcipitandus liber ſpiritus, ut furentis animi vaticinatio appareat.* [c. cxviii.] And to the ſame purpoſe every good critic, antient or modern. But who can endure the grimace of thoſe minute *genii*, who, becauſe the truly inſpired, in the ravings of the fit, are *touched* with the flame and fury of enthuſiaſm, muſt, therefore, with a tame, frigid fancy, be laying claim to the ſame fervent and fiery raptures? The fate of theſe *aſpirants* to divinity is that

that ἐνθουσιᾷν ἑαυτοῖς δοκοῦντες, οὐ βακχεύουσιν, ἀλλὰ παίζουσιν [Longin. περ. ὕψ. τμημ. χ.] And Quinctilian opens the myſtery of the whole matter: *Quo quiſque ingenio minus valet, hoc ſe magis attollere et dilatare conatur: ut ſtatura breves in digitos eriguntur et plura infirmi minantur. Nam tumidos et corruptos et tinnulos et quocunque alio cacozeliæ genere peccantes, certum habeo, non virium, ſed infirmitatis vitio laborare: ut corpora non robore, ſed valetudine inflantur: et recto itinere lapſi plerumque divertunt.* [L. ii. c. 3.]

298. Bona pars non ungues, etc.] The conſtant and pitiful affectation of the race before ſpoken of, who, with the modeſty of laying claim to the *thing*, will be ſure not to omit the *ſign*, and ſo, from fancying an inſpiration, they have *not* come to adopt every foppery, that has ever diſgraced it in thoſe who *have*.

308. Quid deceat, quid non.] *Nihil eſt difficilius quam,* quid deceat, *videre.* Πρέπον *appellant hoc Græci: nos dicamus ſane* Decorum. *De quo præclare et multa præcipiuntur, et res eſt cognitione digniſſima. Hujus ignoratione non modo in vitâ, ſed ſæpiſſime in* Poematis *et in oratione peccatur.* [Orator. xxi.]

309. SCRIBENDI RECTE, SAPERE EST ET PRINCIPIUM ET FONS.] The Orator was of the ſame mind, when he ſent his pupil to the academy for inſtruction. *Quis neſcit maximam vim exiſtere oratoris in hominum mentibus vel ad iram, aut dolorem incitandis, vel ab hiſce iiſdem permotionibus ad lenitatem miſericordiamque revocandis? quæ, niſi qui naturas hominum, vimque omnem humanitatis, cauſaſque eas quibus mentes aut incitantur aut reflectuntur, penitus perſpexerit, dicendo, quod volet, perficere non poterit. Atqui* TOTUS HIC LOCUS PHILOSOPHORUM PROPRIUS VIDETUR. [De Orat. l. i. c. xii.] And he ſpoke, we know, from his own experience, *having acquired his oratorial ſkill not in the ſchools of the rhetoricians, but the walks of the academy: fateor me oratorem, ſi modo ſim, aut etiam quicunque ſim, non ex rhetorum officinis, ſed ex Academiæ ſpatiis extitiſſe.* [Orat. p. 622. Elz. ed.] But the reaſon he gives for this advice, though common to the poet; whoſe character, as well as the orator's, it is, *poſſe voluntates impellere, quo velis, unde velis, deducere,* is yet, not the only one, which reſpects the poet. For his buſineſs is to *paint*, and that not only, as the orator does, in order to move, but for the ſole end of *pleaſing: ſolam petit voluptatem.* [Quinct. l. x. c. i.] The boaſt of his art is to catch every different aſpect

of

of nature, and more eſpecially to exhibit the human character in every varying light and form, under which it preſents itſelf. But this is not to be done without an exquiſite ſtudy, and philoſophical knowledge of man; to which end, as is remarked in n. on ✱ 317. the Socratic philoſophy is more peculiarly adapted. Add to this, that it is the genius of true poetry, not only to animate, but to *perſonalize* every thing, *omnia debent eſſe morata*. Hence the indiſpenſable neceſſity of moral ſcience: all poetry being, in effect, what Mr. Dryden ſomewhere calls comedy, THE THEFT OF POETS FROM MANKIND.

310. SOCRATICAE CHARTAE.] An admired writer, in many reſpects deſervedly ſo, thus comments on theſe words: "The philo-"ſophical writings, to which our poet refers, "were in themſelves a kind of poetry, like the "*mimes*, or perſonated pieces of early times, "before philoſophy was in vogue, and when as "yet *Dramatical imitation* was ſcarce formed: "or at leaſt, in many parts, not brought to due "perfection. They were pieces, which, be-"ſides their force of ſtyle, and hidden numbers, "carried a ſort of *action* and *imitation*, the ſame "as the *Epic* and *Dramatic* kinds. They were "either real dialogues, or recitals of ſuch per-

"ſonated

"ſonated diſcourſes; where the perſons them-
"ſelves had their characters preſerved through-
"out; their manners, humours, and diſtinct
"turns of temper and underſtanding maintained,
"according to the moſt exact poetical truth."
"'Twas not enough, that theſe pieces treated
"fundamentally of morals, and, in conſequence,
"pointed out real characters and manners:
"They exhibited them alive, and ſet the coun-
"tenances and complexions of men plainly in
"view. And by this means they not only
"taught us to know others; but, what was
"principal and of higheſt virtue in them, they
"taught us to know ourſelves." Thus far then theſe models are of unqueſtioned uſe to writers of every denomination. I forbear to mention, what this noble author finds occaſion frequently to inſinuate, and, by his own practice, labours to recommend, the ſuperior excellency of the *manner*, as well as *matter*, of theſe highly-rated originals. Not that I preſume to think it unworthy of imitation. But the public taſte, as appears, is running full faſt that way, inſomuch that ſome may even doubt, if the ſtate of literary compoſition be more endangered by the neglect, or vicious imitation, of the Platonic manner. Its graces, when ſparingly employed by a real genius, for the embelliſhment of ſtrong ſenſe, have, it muſt be owned, great beauty.

But

But when this humour of *platonizing* ſeizes on ſome minuter ſpirit, bent on ennobling a trivial matter, and all over-run with academic delicacy and affectation, nothing, to a juſt and manly reliſh, can be more diſguſting. One muſt wink hard not to ſee frequent examples of this, in the maſter Platoniſt himſelf. But his mimics, of late, have gone much farther. There is no need, in ſuch a croud of inſtances, to point to particulars. What I would rather obſerve is, that this folly, offenſive as it is, may perhaps admit of ſome excuſe from the *preſent ſtate of our literature*, and *the character of the great original himſelf*, whom theſe writers aſpire to imitate. When a language, as ours at this time, hath been much poliſhed and enriched with perfect models of ſtyle in almoſt every way, it is in the order of things, that the next ſtep ſhould be to a *vicious affectation*. For the ſimplicity of true taſte, under theſe circumſtances, grows inſipid. Something *better than the beſt* muſt be aimed at; and the reader's languid appetite raiſed by the provocatives of an ambitious refinement. And this in *ſentiment*, as well as *language*. Whence we ſee how it happened that, even in *Greece* itſelf, where compoſition was ſtudied with a more than common accuracy, *Philoſophy*, when it paſſed out of the hands of its great maſters, degenerated by degrees into the ſubtilties of ſophiſtry,

phiſtry, as did *Eloquence*, likewiſe, into the tricks of rhetoric.

But there was ſomething, as I hinted, too, in the *character of the writer imitated*, of a very tickliſh and dangerous nature; and of which our tribe of imitators were not ſufficiently aware. A very exact critic of antiquity hath told us what it was. It lay in Plato's *bringing the tumor of poetic compoſition into diſcourſes of philoſophy*, ΟΤΙ ΤΟΝ ΟΓΚΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗΣ ΚΑΤΑΣΚΕΥΗΣ ΕΠΙ ΛΟΓΟΥΣ ΗΓΑΓΕ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΟΥΣ [*t*]. And though the experiment, for the moſt part, ſucceeded not amiſs (as what contradiction is there which ſuperior genius cannot reconcile?) yet it ſometimes failed even in his hands. And as a French writer well expreſſes it, LE DIVIN *Plato, pour avoir voulu s'elever trop au deſſus des hommes, eſt ſouvent tombè dans un* GALIMATIAS *pompeux que quelques uns confondent avec le* SUBLIME. The PHAEDRUS, though the moſt remarkable, is not the only example of ſuch miſchance in the writings of this great man.

317. VERAS HINC DUCERE VOCES.] *Truth*, in poetry, means ſuch an expreſſion, as conforms to the general nature of things; *falſhood*, that, which, however ſuitable to the particular inſtance in

[*t*] DIONYS. HALICARN. EP. AD C. POMP. p. 205. *Edit. Huds.*

in view, doth yet not correſpond to ſuch *general nature*. To attain to this *truth* of expreſſion in dramatic poetry two things are preſcribed: 1. A diligent ſtudy of the Socratic philoſophy; and 2. A maſterly knowledge and comprehenſion of human life. The *firſt*, becauſe it is the peculiar diſtinction of this ſchool *ad veritatem vitæ propius accedere*. [Cic. de Or. i. 51.] And the *latter*, as rendering the imitation more univerſally ſtriking. This will be underſtood by reflecting that *truth* may be followed too cloſely in works of imitation, as is evident in two reſpects. For, 1. the artiſt, when he would give a Copy of nature, may confine himſelf too ſcrupulouſly to the exhibition of *particulars*, and ſo fail of repreſenting the general idea of the *kind*. Or, 2. in applying himſelf to give the *general* idea, he may collect it from an enlarged view of *real* life, whereas it were ſtill better taken from the nobler conception of it as ſubſiſting only in the *mind*. This laſt is the kind of cenſure we paſs upon the *Flemiſh* ſchool of painting, which takes its model from real nature, and not, as the *Italian*, from the contemplative idea of beauty [*u*]. The

[*u*] In conformity with the *Antique*. *Nec enim Phidias, cum faceret Jovis formam aut Minervæ, contemplabatur aliquem e quo ſimilitudinem duceret: ſed ipſius in mente incidebat* ſpecies pulchritudinis eximia quædam, *quam intuens in eaque defixus ad illius ſimilitudinem artem et manum dirigebat* [Cic. Orat. 2.]

former

*former* correſponds to that other fault objected alſo to the Flemiſh maſters, which conſiſts in their copying from particular odd and grotesque nature in contradiſtinction to general and graceful nature.

We ſee then that in deviating from particular and partial, the poet more faithfully imitates *univerſal*, truth. And thus an anſwer occurs to that refined argument, which Plato invented and urged, with much ſeeming complacency, againſt poetry. It is, that *poetical imitation is at a great diſtance from truth.* "Poetical expreſſion, ſays the Philoſopher, is the copy of the poet's own conceptions; the poet's conception, of things, and things, of the ſtanding archetype, as exiſting in the divine mind. Thus the poet's expreſſion, is a copy at third hand, from the primary, original truth." [Plat. De rep. l. x.] Now the diligent ſtudy of this rule of the poet obviates this reaſoning at once. For, by abſtracting from exiſtences all that peculiarly reſpects and diſcriminates the *individual*, the poet's conception, as it were neglecting the intermediate particular objects, catches, as far as may be, and reflects the divine archetypal idea, and ſo becomes itſelf the copy or image of truth. Hence too we are taught the force of that unuſual encomium on poetry by the great critic, *that it is ſomething more ſevere and philoſo-*

*philoſophical than hiſtory*, φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν. The reaſon follows, which is now very intelligible; ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλε, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει. [περ. ποιητ. κ. θ.] And this will further explain an eſſential difference, as we are told, between the two great rivals of the Greek ſtage. Sophocles, in return to ſuch as objected a want of truth in his characters, uſed to plead, *that he drew men ſuch as they ought to be, Euripides ſuch as they were.* Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη, αὐτὸς μὲν οἵες δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδης δὲ οἷοί εἰσι. [Περ. ποιητ. κ. κε.] The meaning of which is, Sophocles, from his more extended commerce with mankind, had enlarged and widened the narrow, partial conception, ariſing from the contemplation of *particular* characters, into a complete comprehenſion of the *kind*. Whereas the philoſophic Euripides, having been moſtly converſant in the academy, when he came to look into life, keeping his eye too intent on ſingle, really exiſting perſonages, ſunk the *kind* in the *individual*; and ſo painted his characters naturally indeed, and *truly*, with regard to the objects in view, but ſometimes without that general and univerſally ſtriking likeneſs, which is demanded to the full exhibition of poetical truth.

But

But here an objection meets us, which muſt not be overlooked. It will be ſaid, "that philoſophic ſpeculations are more likely to render men's views *abſtract* and *general* than to confine them to *individuals*. This latter is a fault ariſing from the *ſmall number* of objects men happen to contemplate: and may be removed not only by taking a view of many *particulars*, which is knowledge of the world; but alſo by reflecting on the *general nature* of men, as it appears in good books of morality. For the writers of ſuch books form their *general* notion of human nature from an extenſive experience (either their own, or that of others) without which their writings are of no value." The anſwer, I think, is this. *By reflecting on the general nature of man* the philoſopher learns, what is the tenor of action ariſing from the predominancy of certain qualities or properties: *i. e.* in general, what that conduct is, which the imputed character requires. But to perceive clearly and certainly, how far, and with what degree of ſtrength this or that character will, on particular occaſions, moſt probably ſhew itſelf, this is the fruit only of a knowledge of the world. Inſtances of a want of this knowledge cannot be ſuppoſed frequent in ſuch a writer, as Euripides; nor, when they occur, ſo glaring as to ſtrike a common reader. They are niceties, which can

only

only be diſcerned by the true critic; and even to *him*, at this diſtance of time, from an ignorance of the Greek manners, that may poſſibly appear a fault, which is a real beauty. It would therefore be dangerous to think of pointing out the places, which Ariſtotle might believe liable to this cenſure in Euripides. I will however preſume to mention one, which, if not juſtly criticized, will, at leaſt, ſerve to illuſtrate my meaning.

The ſtory of his *Electra* is well known. The poet had to paint, in the character of this princeſs, a virtuous, but fierce, reſentful woman; ſtung by a ſenſe of perſonal ill treatment; and inſtigated to the revenge of a father's death, by ſtill ſtronger motives. A diſpoſition of this warm temperament, it might be concluded by the philoſopher in his cloſet, would be prompt to ſhew itſelf. *Electra* would, on any proper occaſion, be ready to avow her reſentment, as well as to forward the execution of her purpoſe. But to what lengths would this *reſentment* go? *i. e.* what degree of fierceneſs might *Electra* expreſs, without affording occaſion to a perſon widely ſkilled in mankind, and the operation of the paſſions, to ſay, "this is improbable?" Here abſtract theories will be of little ſervice. Even a moderate acquaintance with real life will be unable to direct us. Many individuals

may have fallen under obſervation, that will juſtify the poet in carrying the expreſſion of ſuch a *reſentment* to any extreme. Hiſtory would, perhaps, furniſh examples, in which a virtuous reſentment hath been carried even farther than is here repreſented by the poet. What way then of determining the preciſe bounds and limits of it? Only by obſerving in numerous inſtances, *i. e.* from a large extenſive knowledge of practical life, how far it uſually, in ſuch characters, and under ſuch circumſtances, prevails. Hence a difference of repreſentation will ariſe in proportion to the extent of that *knowledge*. Let us now ſee, how the character before us, hath, in fact, been managed by Euripides.

In that fine ſcene, which paſſes between Electra and Oreſtes, whom as yet ſhe ſuſpects not to be her brother, the converſation very naturally turns upon Electra's diſtreſſes, and the author of them, Clytytæmneſtra, as well as on her hopes of deliverance from them by the means of Oreſtes. The dialogue upon this proceeds:

*Or.* What then of Oreſtes, were he to return to this Argos?

*El.* Ah! wherefore that queſtion, when there is no proſpect of his return at all?

*Or.* But ſuppoſing he ſhould return, how would he go about to revenge the death of his father?

*El.*

*El.* In the ſame way, in which that father ſuffered from the daring attempts of his enemies.

*Or.* And could you then dare to undertake with him the murder of your mother?

*El.* Yes, with that very ſteel, with which ſhe murdered my father.

*Or.* And am I at liberty to relate this to your brother, as your fixed reſolution?

*El.* I deſire only to live, till I have murdered my mother. The Greek is ſtill ſtronger:

*May I die, as ſoon as I have murdered my mother!*

Now that this laſt ſentence is abſolutely unnatural, will not be pretended. There have been doubtleſs many examples, under the like circumſtances, of an expreſſion of revenge carried thus far. Yet, I think, we can hardly help being a little ſhocked at the fierceneſs of *this* expreſſion. At leaſt *Sophocles* has not thought fit to carry it to that extreme. In him, *Electra* contents herſelf with ſaying to *Oreſtes*, on a ſimilar occaſion;

"The conduct of this affair now reſts upon "you. Only let me obſerve this to you, that, "had I been left alone, I would not have failed "in one of theſe two purpoſes, either to deliver "myſelf glorioully, or to periſh glorioully."

Whether this repreſentation of Sophocles be not more agreeable to *truth*, as collected from

wide obſervation, *i. e.* from human nature at large, than that of Euripides, the capable reader will judge. If it be, the reaſon I ſuppoſe to have been, *that Sophocles painted his characters, ſuch, as, from attending to numerous inſtances of the ſame kind, he would conclude they ought to be; Euripides, ſuch, as a narrower ſphere of obſervation had perſuaded him they were.*

319. INTERDUM SPECIOSA LOCIS, etc.] The poet's ſcience in *ethics* will principally ſhew itſelf in theſe two ways, 1. in furniſhing proper matter for general reflexion on human life and conduct; and, 2. in a due adjuſtment of the manners. By the former of theſe two applications of moral knowledge a play becomes, what the poet calls, *ſpecioſa locis*, i. e. (for the term is borrowed from the rhetoricians) *ſtriking in its moral topics:* a merit of the higheſt importance on the antient ſtage, and which, if prudently employed in ſubſerviency to the *latter* more eſſential requiſite of the drama, *a juſt expreſſion of the manners*, will deſerve to be ſo reputed at all times, and on every theatre. The danger is, leſt a ſtudied, declamatory *moral*, affectedly introduced, or indulged to exceſs, ſhould prejudice the natural exhibition of the *characters*, and ſo convert *the image of human life* into an unaffecting, philoſophical dialogue.

319. MORATAQUE RECTE FABULA, etc.] This judgment of the poet, in regard of the ſuperior efficacy of *manners*, is generally thought to be contradicted by Ariſtotle; who in treating this ſubject, obſerves, "that let a piece be "never ſo perfect in the *manners*, *ſentiments*, "and *ſtyle*, it will not ſo well anſwer the end "and purpoſe of tragedy, as if defective in "theſe, and finiſhed only in the fable and "compoſition." Ἐάν τις ἐφεξῆς θῇ ῥήσεις ἠθικὰς καὶ λέξεις καὶ διανοίας εὖ πεποιημένας, οὐ ποιήσει ὃ ἦν τῆς τραγῳδίας ἔργον, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἡ καταδεεστέροις τούτοις κεχρημένη τραγῳδία, ἔχουσα δὲ μῦθον καὶ σύστασιν πραγμάτων. Κεφ. ϛʹ. M. Dacier thinks to clear this matter by ſaying, "that "what Ariſtotle remarks holds true of tragedy, "but not of comedy, of which alone Horace is "here ſpeaking." But granting that the artificial contexture of the fable is leſs neceſſary to the perfection of comedy, than of tragedy (as it certainly is), yet the tenor of this whole diviſion, exhorting to correctneſs in general, makes it unqueſtionable, that Horace muſt intend to include *both*. The caſe, as it ſeems to me, is this. The poet is not comparing the reſpective importance of the *fable* and *manners*, but of the *manners* and *diction*, under this word including alſo *numbers*. He gives them the preference

*not* to a *good plot*, nor even to *fine ſentiments*, but to *verſus inopes rerum nugæque canoræ.* The *art* he ſpeaks of, is the art of *expreſſing* the thoughts properly, gracefully, and harmoniouſly: the *pondus* is the force and energy of good *verſification. Venus* is a general term including both kinds of beauty. *Fabula* does not mean the *fable* (in diſtinction from the reſt) but ſimply *a play.*

323. GRAIIS INGENIUM, etc.] The Greeks being eminent for *philoſophy*, eſpecially *morals*; the laſt obſervation naturally gives riſe to this. For the tranſition is eaſy from their ſuperiority, as philoſophers, to their ſuperiority as poets; and the more eaſy, as the latter is ſhewn to be, in part, the effect of the former. Now this ſuperiority of the Greeks in genius and eloquence (which would immediately occur, on mentioning the *Socraticæ chartæ)* being ſeen and confeſſed, we are led to aſk, " whence this ariſes." The anſwer is, from their making *glory*, not *gain*, the object of their wiſhes.

330. AERUGO ET CURA PECULI CUM SEMEL IMBUERIT, etc.] This *love of gain*, to which Horace imputes the imperfect ſtate of the Roman poetry, hath been uniformly aſſigned, by the wiſdom of antient times, as the ſpecific bane

bane of arts and letters. *Longinus* and *Quintilian* account, from hence, for the decay of eloquence, *Galen* of phyſic, *Petronius* of painting, and *Pliny*, of the whole circle of the liberal arts. An ingenious modern is indeed for carrying his views much further. He, it ſeems, would account [Refl. ſur la Poeſ. et ſur la Peint. v. ii. § xiv.] for this *public degeneracy* of taſte and literature, not from the malignity of the ſelfiſh paſſions, but the baleful influences of the air, emulating, I ſuppoſe, herein, the wiſdom of that philoſophy, which teaches to lay the *private degeneracy* of individuals on the ſtars. Thus much however may be true, that other cauſes have generally co-operated with it. Some of theſe, as might be ſhewn, did not eſcape the attention of theſe wiſe antients. Yet they did right to inſiſt chiefly on *this*, which is every way equal to the effect aſcribed to it. It is ſo in its *nature*: For being, as Longinus calls it, νόσημα μικροποιὸν, *a diſeaſe which narrows and contracts the ſoul*, it muſt, of courſe, reſtrain the generous efforts and expanſions of genius; cramp the free powers and energies of the mind, and render it unapt to open itſelf to wide views, and to the projection of great, extenſive deſigns. It is ſo in its *conſequences*. For, as one ſays elegantly, *when the paſſion of avarice grows general in a country, the temples of Honour are ſoon pulled down, and*

 *all*

*all men's ſacrifices are made to Fortune* [*w*]. Thus extinguiſhing the ſenſe of honour, that divineſt movement in our frame, and the only one, which can invigorate the mind under the long labours of invention, it muſt needs be, that the fire and high ſpirit of genius go out with it; and dragging in its train the *love of pleaſure*, that unmanlieſt of all the paſſions, it diffuſes ſuch a languor and impotency over the mind, as muſt leave it at length a prey to a ſupine waſting indolence; till, as Longinus obſerves of his own age (and let every friend to letters deprecate the omen), Πάντες ἐγκαταβιοῦμεν, οὐκ ἄλλως πονοῦντες, ἢ ἀναλαμβάνοντες, εἰ μὴ ἐπαίνου καὶ ἡδονῆς ἕνεκα, ἀλλὰ μὴ τῆς ζήλου καὶ τιμῆς ἀξίας ποτὲ ὠφελείας.

333. AUT PRODESSE VOLUNT, AUT DELECTARE POETAE, etc.] Though theſe lines have the appearance of general criticiſm, yet do they more eſpecially reſpect the dramatic poeſy. This will be evident from attending to the context. The full boaſt and glory of the drama is to *delight* and *inſtruct* mankind. 1. The latter praiſe was more eſpecially due to the antient tragic muſe, who did not think it ſufficient to paint lovely pourtraitures of *public* and *ſocial* virtue, and to call in the moralizing chorus to her aſ-

[*w*] Sir *William Temple*.

ſiſtance,

ſiſtance, but, which was one of her diſcriminating characters, ſhe was perpetually inculcating every branch of true moral in thoſe brief ſententious precepts, which inform and ſolemnize her page. To theſe precepts then the poet manifeſtly refers in thoſe lines,

*Quicquid præcipies, eſto brevis: ut cito dicta*
*Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.*

But what follows is ſtill clearer, [2.] The other end of the drama is to *entertain*, and this by the means of *probable fiction.*

*Ficta, voluptatis cauſa, ſint proxima veris.*

And the poet applies this to the caſe of the drama in expreſs words:

*Ne quodcunque volet, poſcat ſibi fabula credi:*
*Neu pranſæ Lamiæ vivum puerum extrahat alvo.*

The inſtance of *Lamia*, as Mr. Dacier obſerves, is certainly taken from ſome poet of that time, who had been guilty of this miſconduct. The reader may learn from hence, how intently Horace purſues his deſign of criticizing the *Roman ſtage*, when, in treating a ſubject, from its nature, the moſt general of any in the epiſtle, *viz. critical correctneſs*, we yet find him ſo induſtriouſly recurring to this point.

343. MI-

343. MISCUIT UTILE DULCI. The unnatural ſeparation of the DULCE ET UTILE hath done almoſt as much hurt in *letters* as that of the HONESTUM AND UTILE, which Tully ſomewhere complains of, hath done in *morals*. For while the polite writer, as he is called, contents himſelf with the *former* of theſe qualities, and the man of erudition with the *latter*, it comes to paſs, as the ſame writer expreſſes it, that ET DOCTIS ELOQUENTIA POPULARIS, ET DISERTIS ELEGANS DOCTRINA DESIT [Orat. iii.]

363. HAEC AMAT OBSCURUM, VOLET HAEC SUB LUCE VIDERI.] Cicero hath given the ſame precept in relation to oratory, *habeat illa in dicendo admiratio ac ſumma laus umbram aliquam et receſſum, quo magis id, quod erit illuminatum, extare atque eminere videatur.* [De orat. l. iii, c. xxvi.]

373. MEDIOCRIBUS ESSE POETIS NON HOMINES, etc.] This judgment, however ſevere it may ſeem, is according to the practice of the beſt critics. We have a remarkable inſtance in the caſe of *Apollonius Rhodius*, who, though, in the judgment of Quinctilian, the author of a no contemptible poem, yet, on account of that *equal mediocrity*, which every where prevails in him,

him, was ſtruck out of the liſt of good writers by ſuch ſovereign judges of poetical merit, as Ariſtophanes and Ariſtarchus. [Quinct. l. x. c. i.]

403. DICTAE PER CARMINA SORTES,] The oracles here ſpoken of, are ſuch as reſpect not *private perſons* (whom a natural curioſity, quickened by anxious ſuperſtition, has ever prompted to pry into their future fortunes) but *entire communities*; and for theſe there was little place, till Ambition had inſpired great and eventful deſigns, and by involving the fate of nations, had rendered the knowledge of futurity *important*. Hence, in marking the progreſs of antient poeſy, Horace judiciouſly poſtpones *oracles*, to the *celebration* of martial *prowefs*, as being that, which gave the principal *eclat* to them. This ſpecies of poetry then is rightly placed, though it be true, as the commentators have objected, that oracles were much antienter than Homer, and the Trojan war.

404. ET VITAE MONSTRATA VIA EST ;] Meaning the writings of *Theognis*, *Phocylides*, *Heſiod*, and others, which, conſiſting wholly of moral precepts, are elegantly ſaid to lay open, or diſcover *the road of life*. Mr. Dacier's interpretation, which makes the poet mean *phyſics* by *viam vitæ*, is ſupported by no reaſon. *Il ne faut*

*pas*,

*pas*, ſays he, *entendre ceci de la philoſophie et des mœurs*; CAR *Horace ſe contrediroit, puiſque il a dit que ce fut le premier ſoin de la poeſie*. The learned critic did not conſider, that the firſt care of poeſy, as explained above, and as employed by *Orpheus* and *Amphion*, was to inculcate *policy*, not *moral*.

404. ET GRATIA REGUM, PIERIIS TENTATA MODIS, LUDUSQUE REPERTUS ET LONGORUM OPERUM FINIS: NE FORTE PUDORI SIT TIBI MUSA LYRAE SOLERS, ET CANTOR APOLLO.] This is one of thoſe maſter-ſtrokes, which make the ſovereign charm of this poet. But the way, in which it hath been underſtood, extinguiſhes all its grace and beauty. *On les vers employa*, ſays an interpreter, who ſpeaks the ſenſe of the reſt, *à gagner la faveur des rois, et on les mit de tous les jeux et de tous les ſpectacles, qu'on inventa pour ſe delaſſer de ſes longs travaux et de toutes ſes fatigues. Je vous dis cela afin que vous n'ayez point de honte de faire la cour aux Muſes et à Apollon*. And, leſt, this ſhould not ſeem explicit enough, he adds in a couple of notes, that by *ludus repertus*, &c. *il* [le poete] *veut parler des tragedies et des comedies que l'on faiſoit jour dans les fêtes ſolemnelles*. And then, as to the *ne forte pudori*, *Cela prouve qu' Horace ne fait cet eloge de la poeſie que pour empecher que Piſon n'en fût degouté*. Can any

any thing be more inſipid? For could the poet think ſo meanly of his art, as to believe it wanted an apology? Or had the *courtier* ſo little addreſs, as to direct that apology immediately to the Piſos? Beſides, what ſpecies of poeſy is it, that he labours to excuſe? Why, according to this interpretation, the *dramatic:* the ſupreme boaſt of his art, and the main ſubject of the epiſtle. And in what *manner* does he excuſe it? Why, in recommending it, as an agreeable amuſement. But his maſter, Ariſtotle, would have furniſhed him with a nobler plea: and 'tis certain, the antients talked at another rate of the uſe and end of the drama. Let us ſee then, if the ſenſe, given in the commentary, will bring any relief to the poet. In fact, this whole paſſage [from *et vitæ*, etc. to *cantor Apollo*] obliquely glances at the two ſorts of poetry, peculiarly cultivated by himſelf, and is an indirect apology for his own choice of them. For 1. *vitæ monſtrata via eſt* is the character of his *ſermones*. And 2. all the reſt, of his *Odes*. Theſe are recommended, agreeably to their nature, 1. as of uſe to *conciliate the favour of princes*; hereby glancing at the ſucceſs of his own odes, and, with the happieſt addreſs, inſinuating the regard, which Auguſtus paid to letters. 2. As contributing to the mirth and entertainment of feaſts, and eſpecially as hold-

ing

ing a principal place in the celebration of thoſe more ſacred, ſecular feſtivities (*longorum operum finem*) which could not be duly ſolemnized, without the miniſtration of the lyric muſe.

*Caſtis cum pueris ignara puella mariti,*
*Diſceret unde preces, vatem ni muſa dediſſet?*
2 Ep. i. 132.

And again:

*ego Diis amicum,*
*Sæculo feſtas referente luces,*
*Reddidi carmen docilis modorum*
*Vatis Horati.* Carm. ſec.

In another place both ends are expreſſed:

*teſtudo*
*Divitum* MENSIS *et amica* TEMPLIS. 3 O. xi.

Where it may be obſerved, this double character of lyric poetry exactly correſponds to that, which the poet had before expreſsly given of it in this very epiſtle: the *gratia regum* being the ſame as

*Muſa dedit fidibus Divos pueroſque Deorum*
*Et pugilem victorem et equum certamine primum.*
ỳ 83.

And *luduſque repertus*, deſcribing its other office,

*Et juvenum curas et libera vina referre.* ib.

In this view the following line, which apologizes, not for poeſy in general, or its nobleſt

4 ſpecies,

ſpecies, the drama, but for his own lyrics only, hath, as the reader perceives, infinite grace; and is peculiarly marked with that vein of exquiſite humour, ſo ſuited to the genius of the epiſtle, and which makes one of the diſtinguiſhing beauties of the poet. It hath alſo an extreme *propriety*; the levity of the ode admitting, or rather requiring ſome apology to the Piſos; who would be naturally led to think but meanly of it, in compariſon of the ſublimer dramatic poetry. I muſt add, the very terms of the apology ſo expreſsly define and characterize lyric poetry, that it is ſomething ſtrange, it ſhould have eſcaped vulgar notice: *muſa lyræ ſolers* being evidently explained by *Romanæ fidicen lyræ* [4 O. iii. 23.] and the epithet *cantor*, deſcribing Apollo, as clearly as words can do it, in the peculiar character of *Lyric*.

407. Cantor Apollo. Natura fieret, etc.] The tranſition is delicate, and a fine inſtance of that kind of method, which the Epiſtle demands. The poet had juſt been ſpeaking of the ode, and its inſpirer, *cantor Apollo*; and this, in the natural train of his ideas, ſuggeſted that enthuſiaſm, and ſtretch of genius, which is at once the characteriſtic and glory of the lyric compoſition. And this was ground enough, in an Epiſtle, to paſs on to ſay ſomething concerning

ing the power and influence of genius in poetry in general. It was for want of attending to ſo plain a reflexion, as this, that the excellent Heinſius trifled ſo egregiouſly, in his tranſpoſitions of the Epiſtles, and in particular of this very place. And the haſty cenſures, which Mr. Dacier paſſed on the poet's method, are apparently owing to no other cauſe [See his introduct. remarks.] But to declare my ſenſe at parting, of the *latter* of theſe critics, I would ſay, as he himſelf does of the former, *C'eſt aſſez parlé contre M.* DACIER, *dont j'eſtime et admire autant la profonde érudition, que je condamne la mauvais uſage qu'il en a fait en quelques rencontres.*

410. ALTERIUS SIC ALTERA POSCIT OPEM RES ET CONJURAT AMICE.] This concluſion, "that art and nature muſt conſpire to the production of a perfect piece" is, in the general, unqueſtionably juſt. If we would know the diſtinct powers and provinces of each, a fine paſſage in Longinus will inform us. For, of the five ſources of the ſublime, enumerated by that critic, two only "a grandeur of conception, and the pathetic" come from *nature:* the reſt, "a juſt arrangement of figures," "a ſplendid diction," and "dignity of compoſition," are of the province of *art.* Yet, though their powers are thus diſtinct, each, in order

order to attain its due perfection, muſt conſpire, and be conſociated, with the other. For that "ſublime of conception" and "pathetic en- "thuſiaſm" never make a more ſure and laſting impreſſion, than when cloathed in the graces, and moderated by the ſober ſenſe of *art:* as, on the contrary, the milder beauties of "language" and "artificial compoſition" are never ſo ſecure of ſeizing the attention, as when raiſed and inſpirited by the *pathos*, or *ſublime.* So that the nature of the union, here recommended, is ſuch, as makes it not only neceſſary to the completion of that great end, *viz.* the glory of perfect compoſition; but that either part, in the alliance, may fully effect its own. All which is but the larger explication of another paſſage in Longinus, who teaches, that ΤΟΤΕ Η ΤΕΧΝΗ ΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ, ΗΝΙΚ' ΑΝ ΦΥΣΙΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΔΟΚΗΙ· Η Δ' ΑΥ ΦΥΣΙΣ ΕΠΙΤΥΧΗΣ, ΟΤΑΝ ΛΑΝΘΑΝΟΥΣΑ ΠΕΡΙΕΧΗΙ ΤΗΝ ΤΕΧΝΗΝ. [περ. ὑψ. τμη. κβ'.]

But here, in parting, it will be amuſing, perhaps, to the curious reader to obſerve, what perpetual matter of debate this queſtion hath furniſhed to the antient learned.

It ſeems firſt to have taken its riſe from the high pretenſion of poets to inſpiration [ſee

Pind. Od. iii. Nem.], which was afterwards underſtood in too literal a ſenſe, and in time extended to all works of genius or imitation. The orator, who, as Cicero tells us, is *near a-kin to the poet*, ſet up the ſame claim; principally, as it ſhould ſeem, on the authority of Socrates, who taking occaſion from the ill uſe that had been made of *rhetoric*, to decry it, as an *art*, was herein followed by the moſt illuſtrious of his ſcholars, amongſt whom was Ariſtotle, [Quinct. l. ii. c. 17.] who had written a ſet treatiſe profeſſedly with this view, though his books of rhetoric proceed on very different principles. The queſtion afterwards appeared of ſo much moment to Cicero, that he diſcuſſed it in form, in one of his dialogues De oratore. And Quinctilian, in ſtill later times, found himſelf obliged to reſume the ſame debate, and hath accordingly conſidered it in an entire chapter.

The long continuance of ſo frivolous a diſpute, and which admits ſo eaſy a deciſion, would go near to perſuade one, if, as Shakeſpeare ſpeaks, *they had not the privilege of antiquity upon them*, that the pens of the antient *literati* were not always more wiſely employed, than thoſe of modern controverſialiſts. If we aſk the reaſon, it would ſeem to be owing to that ambitious ſpirit of ſubtlety and refinement, which, as Quinctilian obſerves, *puts men upon teaching not what*

*what they believe to be true, but what, from the falſehood or apparent ſtrangeneſs of the matter, they expect the praiſe of ingenuity from being able to maintain.* This, I ſay, might ſeem to be the cauſe of ſo much perverſity, on the firſt view, and unqueſtionably it had its influence. But the truth is, the real cauſe was ſomething more general and extenſive. It was, in fact, that *natural proneneſs*, ſo Longinus terms it, *in mankind, to cenſure and degrade things preſent*, ἴδιον ἀνθρώπε καταμέμφεσθαι τὰ παρόντα. This in nothing holds truer, than in what concerns the ſtate of literature; as may be ſeen from that unwearied induſtry of the learned to decry whatever appears to be the prevailing taſte of the times; whether it be in ſuggeſting ſome defect to be made good by future improvements; or, as is more common, becauſe the eaſier and leſs invidious taſk, in ſetting up, and magnifying ſome former examples of a different caſt and merit. Thus, in the caſe before us, exquiſite art and commanding genius, being the two only means of riſing to ſuperior literary excellence, in proportion as any age became noted for the one, it was conſtantly defamed, and the preference given to the other. So, during the growth of letters in any ſtate, when a ſublimity of ſentiment and ſtrength of expreſſion, make, as, under thoſe circumſtances, they always will, the

characteriſtic of the times, the critic, diſguſted with the rude workings of nature, affects to admire only the nicer finiſhings and proportions of art. When, let but the growing experience of a few years refine and perfect the public taſte; and what was before traduced as roughneſs and barbarity, becomes at once nerves, dignity, and force. Then art is effeminacy; and judgment, want of ſpirit. All now is rapture and inſpiration. The exacteſt modern compoſitions are unmanly and unnatural, *et ſolos veteres legendos putant, neque in ullis aliis eſſe naturalem eloquentiam et robur viris dignum arbitrantur.* [Quinct. l. x. c. i.] The truth of this obſervation might be juſtified from many examples. The learning and art of *Pacuvius* (for ſo I underſtand the epithet *doctus)* carried it before the ſublime of *Accius*; juſt as in elder Greece the ſmooth and correct *Simonides*, *tenuis Simonides*, as Quinctilian characterizes him, bore away the prize from the lofty and high-ſpirited *Æſchylus*. Afterwards indeed the caſe was altered. The Athenians, grown exact in the rules of good writing, became ſo enamoured of the bold flights of Æſchylus, as with a little correction to admit him on the ſtage, who, by this means, frequently gained the prize from a polite and knowing people, for what had certainly loſt it him in the ſimpler, and leſs informed theatre of

his own times. Thus too it fared with the elder Latin poets, who, though admired indeed in their own age, but with conſiderable abatement from the reaſon before aſſigned, were perfectly idolized in that of Auguſtus; ſo as to require the ſharpeſt ſatire of our poet, to correct the malevolent principle, from whence the affectation aroſe. But the obſervation holds of our own writers. There was a time, when the art of JOHNSON was ſet above the divineſt raptures of SHAKESPEARE. The preſent age is well convinced of the miſtake. And now the genius of SHAKESPEARE is idolized in its turn. Happily for the public taſte, it can ſcarcely be too much ſo. Yet, ſhould any, in the rage of erecting trophies to the genius of antient poeſy, preſume to violate the recent honours of more correct poets, the cauſe of ſuch critical perverſity will be ever the ſame. For all admiration of paſt times, when exceſſive, is ſtill to be accounted for the ſame way,

*Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque ſepultis,*
*Noſtra ſed impugnat, nos noſtraque lividus odit.*

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.